Mr. *Backus's*

DISCOURSE

Shewing the

Nature and *Neceſſity*

OF AN

Internal Call

To preach the Everlaſting Goſpel.

All true Miniſters of the Goſpel, are called into that Work by the ſpecial Influences of the Holy Spirit.

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DISCOURSE,

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Everlaſting Goſpel.

Alſo *Marks* by which Chriſt's Miniſters may be known from others, and Anſwers to ſundry *Objections:* Together with ſome Obſervations on the Principles and Practices of many in the preſent Day concerning theſe Things.

To which is added,

Some ſhort Account of the Experiences and dying Teſtimony of Mr. Nathanael Shepherd.

By ISAAC BACKUS,
Preacher of the Goſpel.

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THE PREFACE.

AS it is the Unhappineſs of Mankind in their benighted Circumſtances, to be divided in Sentiments about many Things in the Method of our Recovery and Salvation : *ſo when they come to ſpeak or write upon Points that are much controverted, it is often done in ſuch a Manner as to increaſe their Contentions and Diviſions, rather than to remove them. One great Cauſe whereof I conceive to be this, namely, a judging of Principles by the Lives of thoſe that hold them, rather than by the*

the eternal Standard of Truth: ſo that if they can ſee many Evils in Perſons that are of contrary Sentiments from themſelves, they are ready to conclude that they have good Grounds to condemn what they hold as falſe. Indeed if we are called to judge whether a Perſon's Profeſſion is true or falſe, that muſt be done by his Life *or* Fruits, *Mat.* 7. 16. *But whether their Principles that they profeſs, be true or falſe, cannot certainly be known by that. I believe that* CHRIST *deſigned to caution his Diſciples againſt this Snare in that Place, Matt.* 23. 2, 3. The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in *Moſes* Seat. All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do. *Some I know frame an Argument from hence to ſupport* unconverted Miniſters, *as if* CHRIST *ſet them up for Teachers: but I conceive that his true Deſign was to caution his Followers againſt caſting away Truth, becauſe ſuch corrupt Men as he was going to ſhew them to be, held it: but whatever they taught agreable to* Moſes *Law, he bid them obſerve, yet not to do after their Works, for they* ſaid and did not. *And he goes on to ſhew, that they* ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men, and neither went in themſelves, nor ſuffered them that were entering to go in. *He calls them* blind Guides, and Serpents, that were not like to eſcape the Damnation of Hell,

Ver.

Ver. 13, 16, 33. *And what Man of Senſe can think that our Saviour owned ſuch as his Meſſengers?*

By the falſe Rule mentioned above, ſome have condemned even the greateſt Points in Religion: as I think I once ſee an Obſervation of Dr. Mather's *concerning a foreign Number of* Heathens *who had ſome Dealings with the* Spaniards; *and they (holding that Heathen Notion of there being many Gods) judg'd that* CHRIST *was the worſt of all Gods, becauſe the* Spaniards *profeſt themſelves to be Chriſtians, and they were the worſt of all Men.*

Another Error near akin to this, is a not diſtinguiſhing carefully between what is good *and what is* bad *in a Perſon, or Body of People; but to condemn or juſtify all together. To which may be added the Way of trying to repreſent others Sentiments or Practice in the worſt Colour they can. By reaſon of which ſome have become guilty of Railery, if not the Breach of the ninth Commandment, while they have been eſſaying to cut down Error.*

Having ſome Sight of theſe Things, has made me endeavour to watch againſt them in writing this Diſcourſe;

Diſcourſe; and to be tender of Men's Perſons while I am ſpeaking againſt their Miſtakes. And I have endeavour'd as much as might be to keep from condemning any Number of People at a Lump, but I have expreſt plainly what I think to be right, and what not among them. Yet ſtill if the careful Reader diſcovers any Thing of theſe, or other Evils in this Treatiſe, impute that to my Infirmity; but let not that hinder your Soul from embracing what is Truth.

One Thing more I will mention that is often a great Hindrance to Men's receiving Truth, and that is, a making a wrong Uſe of the Practice of the Godly in paſt Ages. How common is it for Men to ſay that this or that is contrary to what our Fathers held, and ſo reject it? as if they were our Rule. And many ſeem to think that to vary from them, reflects upon their Characters as if they were corrupt Men. And I expect the moſt Batteries from this Quarter of any, againſt the Truth that I am mainly pleading for in this Book. Therefore, though I have ſaid ſomething to this in anſwer to an Objection, yet I will add a Word here.

Solomon *was a great and good Man, but yet he ſet up the high Places which were moſt provoking to*

GOD,

GOD, 1 King. 11. 7, 8. *And both* Aſa *and* Jehoſhaphat *after him were godly Men, and great Reformers, and yet them high Places were not taken away* (1 King. 15. 14. *and* 22. 43.) *which afterwards* Hezekiah *aboliſhed, and alſo took away the* Braſen Serpent, *which from* Moſes *Time to that Day the Children of* Iſrael *had Idolized*, 2 King. 18. 4. *Now according to this Language that many uſe, they might have ſaid,* " *What! does this* Hezekiah *pretend to* " *know more than* Solomon? *and will he condemn* " *all his godly Fathers as corrupt Men, who held* " *and practiſed theſe Things?*" *And yet after all his Reformation, and the farther Steps thereof that his Grandſon* Joſiah *proceeded in,* (2 King. 23—) *the poor Captives that returned out of* Babylon, *found that none of them all, nor* David *neither, though a* Man after God's own Heart, *had kept the Feaſt of Tabernacles in the Form that* GOD's *Law deſcribed: therefore they reformed that, and kept ſuch a Feaſt, as had not been kept before ſince the Days of* Joſhua *the Son of* Nun, *Neh.* 8. 13—17. *From all which, and much more of the like Nature that might be obſerved, we may ſee plainly that the Example of the beſt of Men is no juſt Objection at all againſt our receiving Truth that they did not ſee. Neither is it to be looked upon any Reflection upon their Character,*

thus to vary from them. If we do not vary from the Scriptures we are safe and happy.

Now 'tis likely that many when they see this Discourse, will be ready to deem it to be Pride and Arrogancy for such a Youth to come out in this Form against so many great, learned, yea and good Men. But I can freely leave that to my divine Master, to plead my Cause, knowing that a good Conscience is better than all the Applause of mortal Men.

Some of the Reasons of my coming forth in this Manner, are as follow. Since the LORD *was pleased to call me forth into this great Work of Preaching the Gospel; as I have had Opportunity to improve in that Work in various Places, the Question has often been ask'd me, especially by the common Ministers of the Land, What Call I held to, whether* ordinary, *or* extraordinary, mediate *or* immediate? *And when we have come to discourse upon it, it has appeared plain to me, that what they hold to be an ordinary Call, is to be called only by Men; and an extraordinary one is to be called of* GOD, *by the special Influences of his* SPIRIT. *For I have heard them go through with*

a

a Deſcription of their Call, and never mention GOD'S SPIRIT *in the Caſe; but only that they were educated for that Purpoſe, and then were introduced, and ordained in an orderly Way.*

Indeed ſome of them will ſay, that they have an internal Call: but when they come to deſcribe it, they ſay, "'Tis a hearty Diſpoſition to ſerve "GOD in that Work." *But is it not ſtrange, that reaſonable Men ſhould reckon this to be a Call from* GOD? *Do they think there ever was a corrupt Man in the World, that went into that Work without ſome Diſpoſition to it, which doubtleſs they called a Diſpoſition to ſerve* GOD? *Or ſhould we allow it to be a ſincere Diſpoſition, yet ſtill that is not a Call. The moſt that can be made of it is a* Willingneſs *to be called. Every Saint when ſtanding as they ought, are willing to do any Thing that* GOD *would have them: but ſomething much further than that is needful in order to make them know that he would have them preach the Goſpel publickly. I would not be underſtood to hold forth that there is none which hold Fellowſhip with the Scheme that I condemn, that have truly experienced a Call from the* SPIRIT *of* GOD *into the* Work *of preaching the Goſpel; for I believe there are ſome, though they may not be convinced of the*

Evil

Evil of that Method of going on. But a great Part of the Miniſters in the Land evidently run in the Channel that I have deſcribed above.

Therefore to return, when I have heard them talk in ſuch a Form, it has put me upon a more cloſe Examination of the Scriptures, and to look more critically into the Nature of theſe Things: (for much of what I have here written, I knew experimentally before I did doctrinally, Prov. 16. 23.) *And after much Search, and crying to the* LORD *for Direction, though it never was my Diſpoſition from a Child to appear ſingular from others, yet I have been conſtrained to appear againſt many in this Point. I waited long and attended diligently to what others could ſay*; I ſaid, Days ſhould ſpeak, and Multitude of Years ſhould teach Wiſdom. But great Men are not always wiſe: therefore I ſaid, I will anſwer my Part, I alſo will ſhew my Opinion, *Job* 32. 7, 9, 17. *For I am perſwaded that many godly People, being traditionally trained up in that way, think it is a* Goſpel-Way: *but being ſo clearly convinced that it is not, it has appeared clear Duty to me not to hide my Candle under a Buſhel, but to hold up the Light which GOD hath given me, for the Good of others.*

Another

Another Motive to my publiſhing this Treatiſe is this, that when the LORD *is carrying on a glorious* Work *for the Good of Souls at any Time, thoſe who ſtand againſt it, will firſt try as much as poſſible to pick ſome Flaw in the Preaching or the Conduct of his Miniſters, that he improves to carry it on; but if they cannot get any Advantage that Way, but are forced to own that ſome notable Things are ſaid, or done: Then the laſt Shift they have to make is,* By what Authority doſt thou theſe Things? And who gave thee this Authority? *Mat.* 21. 23. *Acts* 4. 7. *Therefore it has appeared duly to me, to ſhew what the* Authority *of* CHRIST's *Miniſters is, and how they come by it: and alſo by this, to clear my own Soul from partaking of the Sin of this Generation in theſe Things. And while I have been writing upon theſe Points, the* Work of a Goſpel-Miniſter *has opened with freſh Clearneſs and Weight to my Soul; and has made me cry, Oh! that while I am writing to others, I may never be negligent, but may be made faithful in this great Work my ſelf! What was mainly upon my Mind, was to* deſcribe the Call, *and the* Characters of CHRIST's Meſſengers, *and* how they differ from others: *but in proſecuting this Theme, I have ſet down many Things that are of common Concernment, and if rightly received may be beneficial to all.*

Let

Let none think me to be an Enemy to Learning becauſe of what I have ſaid in this Book: for true Learning is what I highly prize: a clear underſtanding of the proper Uſe of Language, and the Meaning of Words, *whereby Men have ſuch a Priviledge of conveying their Ideas to each other, is very beneficial for all; and a clear Knowledge of the Things of Nature, and of the* Affairs *of Mankind, &c. is good in its Place, and I wiſh there was much more of it in the World than there is. But then there are a great many Notions that ſome take much Time to learn that do no good: and what is worſe, it is evident that in our* Colleges *many learn corrupt Principles, not only about what makes a Miniſter, but alſo about what makes a Chriſtian; for it is too notorious to be denied, that many Scholars that have come out of College of late, are* rank Arminians. *Yet were it not ſo, it is horrid Preſumption to pretend to limit the Moſt High to any Schools, or Bodies of People whatſoever, and to ſay that he ſhall have none for his* Ambaſſadors *but ſuch as Men have trained for that Purpoſe in their way.*

How terrible are thoſe Interrogations? Who hath directed the SPIRIT of the LORD, or being his Counſeller, hath taught him? *Iſai.* 40. 13.

And

And again, Who is like me, and who will appoint me the Time? And who is that Shepherd that will ſtand before me? Surely the leaſt of the Flock ſhall draw them out, *Jer.* 50. 44, 45.

When I have been writing on theſe Things, ſometimes my Belly hath been as Wine *which hath no Vent: and to expreſs what was in my Heart has been very refreſhing, by Reaſon of which, this Diſcourſe is drawn out to a much greater length than was firſt deſigned. And now ſo many Things crowd in upon my Mind that I ſcarce know where to end: but I muſt break off.*-----

Now kind Reader, if thou findeſt any Benefit to thy Soul by this Treatiſe, give all the Glory unto GOD, and pray for your Soul's Friend to ſerve you as GOD ſhall give Opportunity.

Middleborough,
Dec. 18. 1753.

ISAAC BACKUS.

Sarah Ives

Her Book

of Salisbury Jr

The year Anno

Domini 1796

Chap. I.

The Introduction, *ſhewing the right Uſe of the Scriptures, and how God's People are guided by them in theſe Days. And the main Queſtion ſtated and explained.*

ONE very great Means that God has been pleaſed to make uſe of from the beginning for the Recovery and Salvation of loſt Men, has been the Preaching of his Word: And therefore in every Age he has called, and ſet apart particular Men for that Purpoſe. *Jude* ſpeaks of *Enoch*'s propheſying, *Jude* 14. And *Noah* is called a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. 2. 5. And we are told that *God at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners ſpake in Time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets*, Heb. 1. 1. And in latter Times, though *the preaching of the Croſs is to them that periſh Fooliſhneſs: yet unto them that are ſaved, it is the Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 18.

Hence it is a Truth allowed in general by all Perſuaſions, that the publick preaching of the Word, is an Ordinance of divine Appointment. But then there is a great Diverſity of Sentiments, about how Men are to be qualified and introduced into this great Work. Multitudes place their Qualifications more in human Learning, than in divine Enlightnings; and place their Authority more in being externally called, and ſet apart by Men, than in being internally called by the Spirit of God. Yea, many ſeem to make no Account of the latter, but ſet it aſide as an extraordinary Thing, not to be expected in theſe Days. And the main Argument that is commonly brought to prove this is, that the Bible is compleated, and the Days of Inſpiration are ceaſed; therefore to hold that any are by the Spirit and Power of God in theſe Days, called and ſent forth into this Work, this they ſay, is giving heed to new Revelations: for it is no where expreſſed in Scripture, that this or that Man, is, or ever will be called to preach the Goſpel. But though I believe with all my Heart that the Cannon of the Scripture is full; and that there is a Curſe denounced againſt any that ſhall *add to, or diminiſh from it*, Rev. 22. 18, 19: yet I am far from thinking that it is juſt to conclude from hence, that the Lord does not in theſe Days, as really call and direct his Servants by his Spirit as he did in old Time: yea, to deny this, is to contradict a great Part of the Scriptures, as I truſt will hereafter be made appear. This Argument the *Papiſts*, and

and many others make uſe of againſt *Aſſurance*, and it is as good there as here; for it is no more recorded in Scripture that this or that Perſon in our Days is, or ever ſhall be converted, than it is that any Perſon is, or ſhall be called to preach the Goſpel.

But the Truth is, the Scriptures are given as our only perfect Rule, *which is able to build us up, and to give us an Inheritance among all them which are ſanctified, through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, Act. 20. 32. 2 Tim. 3. 15. And it is the Spirit of God, and that alone that inlightens our Minds to underſtand his Word aright, and that ſhews Men their Condition and their Duty, and guides his People into all Truth, *Joh.* 16—When he ſets home the Law upon a Sinner's Conſcience, he is made to know that he is a guilty Soul before God, as certainly as if his Name was expreſt in God's ſacred Book: for it lays open his particular Sins, and charges them home upon his Conſcience with Power; and thus the Word of God becomes a *Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 12. So when a Soul has a Diſcovery of Chriſt, he ſees him not only to be a Saviour in general, but alſo that he is juſt ſuch a Saviour as he needs; and God's Language to ſuch as find Grace in the Wilderneſs is, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlaſting Love, therefore with Loving kindneſs have I drawn thee*, Jer. 31. 2, 3. I know there has been much Diſpute in our Day on this Point, i. e. "Whether

i. e. " Whether the firſt Act of ſaving Faith be " a believing that Chriſt is mine, or no—" But I apprehend that this Similitude, if rightly conſider'd, may help much to clear this Matter: namely, Chriſt's being compared to the Sun: *The Lord God is a Sun— And unto you that fear my Name, ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe—* Pſal. 84. 11. and Mal. 4. 2. Now the Sun in his Being, Luſture and Glory is the Object for us to view, but then it is impoſſible for us to behold it, but its Rays appear to point as directly to us, as if there was not another Perſon in the World for it to ſhine upon: and we partake (as it were) of the whole Benefit of its Influences; and yet 'tis as free for Thouſands of others as for us. So Jeſus Chriſt in his perſonal Glories, and mediatorial Fulneſs, as revealed in the Goſpel, is the Object of Faith: but when any Soul is brought to behold his Glories, them eternal Rays of Light and Love ſhine down particularly upon him, to remove his Darkneſs, heal his Wounds, and ſhed immortal Bleſſings on his Soul; ſo that he has a whole Saviour; and yet ſtill he is free for whoſoever will.

And thus God alſo leads his People in Duty, by applying home his Truth, not barely by ſuggeſting particular Words into our Minds, but by cauſing divine Light to ſhine into our Underſtandings, and giving us to view his Word as it is, and ſo applying the Truths therein recorded to our particular Caſes and Circumſtances.

And

And though many abuſe the Scriptures greatly, and Words may many Times come into their Minds without their Underſtandings being enlightned; which they may improve very foreign from, yea contrary to, what was originally deſign'd therein: yet that is no juſt Argument at all againſt the People of God's having true Teaching in this Matter: Though it ſhews the Importance of taking good Heed in the Caſe, and carefully to compare ſpiritual Things with ſpiritual, and to view the Analogy of the Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 2 13.

Some ſay, that for any of the Words of Scripture to be brought in with Power upon our Minds, and we take them to be the Voice of God to us, this is giving Heed to new Revelations, becauſe them Words were ſpoken to others long ago: but the Apoſtle tells us, (*Rom.* 15. 4.) That WHATSOEVER *Things were written afore time, were written for our Learning, that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope.* What was ſpoken to any of God's People of old as Directions or Commands to Duty, is of conſtant Uſe now to guide his People in like Caſes; as ſaith the Apoſtle, *All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God: and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto* ALL *good VVorks*, 2 Tim. 3. 15,—17.

The ſame alſo may be ſaid of the Promiſes. Here obſerve how the Author to the *Hebrews* teaches

teaches us to improve the Scriptures in this Reſpect. When he was exhorting them Saints to perſevere in a Courſe of practical Religion, and to be content with all the Alotments of divine Providence, he gives them this Ground of Support, for them to reſt upon, viz. *For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. Now this was a particular Promiſe that was made to *Joſhua*, to encourage him to go on boldly in that great Work of leading *Iſrael* into *Canaan*, Joſh. 1. 5. And many of our late Teachers would be ready to ſay, that if any ſhould receive Comfort from them Words coming with Power upon their Hearts, that they were giving Heed to new Revelations therein: but the Apoſtle applies it as belonging to all Souls in every Age, that are engaged in the Work of God, and in going on in his Ways, that they may reſt upon it, and may boldly ſay, *The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what Man can do unto me*: in which he brings in alſo the triumphant Language of holy *David*, as what may be rightly uſed by God's People in general that cleave near unto him, *Pſal.* 118. 6.

I know Scripture Language is awfully uſed, and dreadfully abuſed by many Souls; yet that is no Argument againſt uſing of it in a right Manner. But I ſhall not enlarge further here; though ſomething of this ſeemed needful to lay the Foundation, and to prepare the Way for the following Diſcourſe. And now to come to what is mainly

deſigned

deſigned in this Treatiſe; I ſhall lay down this plain Aſſertion, namely,

That in order for any Man in theſe Days to be truly an Ambaſſador of the LORD OF HOSTS, *he muſt experience eſſentially the ſame Internal Call that all his Meſſengers did of old, both in the Old Teſtament and the New.*

This I ſhall firſt explain a little, and then go on to prove it. Now no Doubt but Perſons in general that are much acquainted with Language, can eaſily diſtinguiſh between the Eſſence of a Thing, and ſome Circumſtances and Appendages that attend it. And in this Caſe, I think, there is a plain Diſtinction to be made between the Eſſence of the Call of the Prophets and Apoſtles, and ſome Things that attended their Call, and Work.

As, 1. Some of them when they were called, had a ſtrange viſionary Diſcovery of Things. *Ezekiel* had ſuch Views of the Glory of God, and the Retinue of his Attendants, as was very ſhocking, and made him fall on his Face, &c. Chap. 1. And many Things of the like Nature we have recorded in Scripture concerning others, which are not commonly experienced now. And as to their Work; a Part of it was to write the Scriptures, which I have no Thought that any will be called to in our Days.

2. There

2. There were many Miracles and extraordinay Things that were wrought by them to confirm the Truth of the Meſſages they brought, to thoſe who had not received God's revealed Mind and Will before; at leaſt thoſe Parts of it that they then brought. Mark 16. 20. *Confirming the VVord with Signs following.* Now as to this, and alſo the extraordinary Gift of Tongues; whether they will be given or no to God's Servants when thoſe Nations ſhall be brought in which hitherto have not known the Word of the Lord, I leave with him that orders all Things, to determine; and to the Conſideration of thoſe that are wiſe of Heart. *

Again, There is this to be obſerved, that in different Periods of the Church, the Lord's Servants have different Works to do in many Particulars, according to the different Circumſtances that the Church is in.

Moſes had many particular Works to do, in bringing *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; and *Joſhua* in leading them into *Canaan*, that none of God's Servants had, in after Ages. The ſame alſo might be ſaid concerning their returning from *Babylon* to re build

* I think I once happened to ſee a printed Letter of Dr WATTS's, in which he mention'd Mr. EDWARDS's Sermon on the *Trial of the Spirit*, preach'd at *New Haven* 1741. and he approved of the main of the Sermon: but withal ſaid, He was not of Mr. EDWARDS's Mind about the Gift of Tongues being ceaſed; for he believed it would be reſtored again when the Heathen Nations ſhould come in.

Jeruſalem

Jeruſalem and the Temple: And again of the aboliſhing of the Jewiſh Ceremonies, and of building the Goſpel Church, *&c.* Every Period may have ſome Things peculiar to that Time. But then I fully agree with the excellent Dr. FRANCK, that "though it cannot be ſaid that "every believing Chriſtian muſt do the very "ſame Works, which were done by *Noah*, "*Abraham*, *Moſes* and others; yet ought every "one to follow the Faith of thoſe godly Men, "and to ſhew, and exert the ſame with full "Power and Energy, in that State and Condi-"tion wherein God has placed him, and in "thoſe Circumſtances which are daily offered: "and in ſo doing, he may be fully aſſured, that "he alſo ſhall ſee the Glory of God, as well "as they of Old did experience the ſame."*

I will illuſtrate this Matter a little farther here by a familiar Inſtance. The Apoſtle *Paul's* Converſion, in the Manner and Circumſtances of it, was uncommon and very extraordinary, *Acts* 9. 3. *&c. A Light at Noon-Day, ſhined round him above the Brightneſs of the Sun; the Lord ſpake to him with an audable Voice; he was ſtruck to the Ground; was ſtruck blind, and eat nothing for three Days, &c.* Now theſe are Things which Perſons do not commonly experience, when they are converted in our Days: And yet the Eſſence and Nature of his Converſion, as he de-

* *See his Treatiſe of the Fear of Man, P.* 169.

ſcribes it himſelf, in the 7th Chapter of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*; and the 3d to the *Philipians*, is the ſame that all Souls in every Age muſt experience, or they can never enter into the Kingdom of God.

So I look upon it in this Caſe: though ſome Things were uncommon in the Call, and Work of the Prophets and Apoſtles; yet eſſentially theirs was the ſame with all true Miniſters of Chriſt in our Days: as I ſhall proceed to prove.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Proof of the Point, that God's Meſſengers now, have eſſentially the ſame internal Call, as they had of Old; by four Arguments.

THE Eſſence of the Call of all God's Meſſengers of Old, as I take it, was their being, by the Work of his Spirit, on their Hearts, commiſſionated, and ſent forth in his Name, to labour for the Recovery and Salvation of periſhing Men.— And that Men muſt experience the ſame, before they can truly be Ambaſſadors of Chriſt now; I think will appear evident from theſe following Conſiderations.

I. They perſonate the ſame eternal God that all his Meſſengers did of Old.— *Moſes* was bid to tell the People, *I AM hath ſent me unto you*, Exod. 3. 14. And *Ezekiel* was to ſay, *Thus ſaith the Lord God, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear*, &c. Ezek. 2. 4, 5. So now in theſe Times, them that have the Word of Reconciliation committed to them, are *Ambaſſadors for Chriſt*,

as

as though God did beſeech you by us; we pray you in CHRIST's Stead, be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 5. 20. And ſurely it is as great a Thing to go in the Name of the great JEHOVAH, to treat with the Children of Men now, as ever it was: therefore they have as much need of being particularly and powerfully called and ſent by Him now, as heretofore: *How ſhall they preach except they be ſent*, Rom. 10. 15.

II. God is as near to his Church now as formerly; and therefore there needs none to be ſubſtituted in his Room, to chuſe out, and ſend forth his Miniſters. This Notion that the Ambaſſadors of the *Lord of Hoſts* now, have not their Call and Commiſſion ſealed to them by the divine Spirit as clearly and powerfully, as they had of Old, ſeems to be founded upon an Apprehenſion that God is gone farther off from his Church in theſe Days than he was then: like a King that viſits his Subjects in various Parts of his Dominion, and gives them Rules and Directions concerning their Behaviour, and appoints Officers over them; and then returns to his Palace, and leaves them to chooſe others afterwards; and ſo to tranſact Affairs in his Abſence.

But though it is very natural for fallen Men to conceive thus of the divine Being; yet ſuch Things are highly provoking to his ſacred Majeſty. This ſeems to be the Sin that *Iſrael* was guilty of *in asking them a King*. Before that the Lord was near to them whenever they ſought him

him in Truth; and did from Time to Time raiſe up and ſend Judges and Leaders to them, juſt as he pleaſed: but they could not bear to have their Leaders thus from God, and to be obliged always to go to him for them: *Nay* (ſaid they) *but let us have a King like the reſt of the Nations*, 1 Sam. 8. 5, 7, 19. So that the Lord tells *Samuel* that *in this they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them.* A putting God afar off is the Root of all Evil; therefore he ſums up the Cauſe of his deſtroying the *Jews* by the *Babylonian* Captivity, in theſe Words, *They ſay the Lord hath forſaken the Earth, and the Lord ſeeth not.*--- Ezek. 9. 9. And as they put him far away in other Things, ſo they did particularly in this, *of ſending forth his Meſſengers*; and they held, *that Men were put in to do it in his Room*: which appears evedient by the Letter that *Shemaiah* the *Nehelamite* (or Dreamer) ſent from *Babylon* about the ſame Time, to *Zephaniah* and the reſt of the Prieſts at *Jeruſalem*, ſaying, *The Lord hath made thee Prieſt inſtead of Jehoiada the Prieſt, that ye ſhould be Officers in the Houſe of the Lord, for every Man that is mad, and maketh himſelf a Prophet, that thou ſhouldeſt put him in Priſon, and in the Stocks. Now therefore, why haſt thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth which* MAKETH HIMSELF *a Prophet to you*, Jer. 29. 25, 26, 27. Note alſo the Method that he preſcribes for to ſtop Deceivers: it is not by ſound Doctrine *to convince the Gainſayers*; (Tit. 1. 9.) but with Force and Cruelty, to put them in Priſon and in the Stocks. And ſuch

is

is the Method that many have taken in our Days.

The very Body of *Antichriſt* conſiſts in ſeting Man up in Chriſt's Place; as ſaith the Apoſtle, *Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhiped; ſo that he as God ſiteth in the Temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 4. Agreable to which, is what *Luther* ſays to the *Pope*, (who pleads as much for a Succeſſion down from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as any do in our Land) ſays he, "How "unlike is Chriſt to his Succeſſors? who yet "would be his Vicars: and I fear many are ſo "too properly. A Vicar is of one abſent. If "the Pope be Preſident, Chriſt being abſent, "what is he other than Chriſt's Vicar? But "what then is that Church, but a Multitude "without Chriſt? And what is ſuch a Vicar, "but Antichriſt and an Idol?" †

And ſurely there is ſomething of Antichriſt in this Scheme, of holding, That what was peculiar to Chriſt formerly (namely the commiſſionating and ſending forth his Miniſters) is now left with Men to do; at leaſt here is *the Number of his Name, which is the Number of a MAN*, Rev. 13. 18. But though Man be ſet up thus in God's Place by many, yet we are told, *that the Lord hath choſen Zion: he hath deſired it for his Habitation* (and ſays) *this is my Reſt* FOREVER: *here will I dwell*,

† *Sufferers Mirrour, Vol.* 2. P. 7.

for

for I have desired it, Psal. 132. 13,----16. And here he will call forth, direct and bless his Ministers, and *will yet clothe them with Salvation, that his Saints may shout aloud for Joy.*

III. The Children of Men; yea the Children of God, are no more capable of chusing out and sending forth, meet Persons for this great Work now, than they were in old Time. If *Samuel* that faithful Servant of the Lord, when he was sent by his immediate Command, to anoint a Person for another Work, was not capable of chusing out the right Man himself; yea, though he was told what Family he should come out of; then surely God's Servants now are not equal to this great Work of chusing out, and sending forth his Messengers from among the vast Crouds of the Children of Men.

The Reason that the Lord gave to *Samuel*, why he was not fit, of himself, to chuse out a meet Person to set over his People *Israel*, was because *Man looks on the outward Appearance, but God looks on the Heart*, 1 Sam. 16. 7. and that Reason stands as good now as then. *Man looks on the outward Appearance*; and therefore he is always prone to chuse the wise, the noble, and learned of this World: but we are told, that *God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things that are mighty; and base Things of the World, and Things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and*

Things

Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are: that no Fleſh ſhould glory in his Preſence, 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28, 29. Again, Man is not fit for this great Work; for he is prone to get proud and ſelfiſh, and then he will encourage none but what will ſute ſome ſelfiſh Intereſt. See how early this appeared, even in the Apoſtles themſelves: and it was ſoon checked by our Saviour. In their Journey to *Capernaum*, the Diſciples got to diſputing, *who ſhould be greateſt.* Pride, and a Notion of Greatneſs was got up, and ſee how it diſcovers itſelf: When Chriſt asked, *what was it that ye diſputed among your ſelves by the Way?* After ſome Pauſe, *John* anſwered him ſaying, *Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out Devils in thy Name, and he followeth not US; and we forbid him, becauſe he followeth not US. But Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not: for he that is not againſt us, is on our Part,* Mark 9. 33----40.

Obſerve Chriſt's Diſciples were inclined to aſſume that to themſelves then, even when he was perſonally with them, that Multitudes have done in latter Days: but you ſee how ſharply he reproves them for it; and can we think that he will allow it in any now?

Once more,

IV. Another Argument that I ſhall mention to prove that Miniſters now ſhould have (as to the Nature of it) the ſame Call that all God's Meſſengers had of old, is, *that their Work is eſſentially as great.* The Work of God's Servants heretofore, was to go in his Name to labour for the Recovery

Recovery and Salvation of loſt Men; and it is the ſame now.

Indeed in that Part of their Work of writing the Holy Scriptures, they laid the Foundation, and we are to build thereon: as the *Church* is ſaid *to be built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner Stone*, Eph. 2. 20.

But then as to their Work of warning Sinners to awake and turn to God, as they would *eſcape eternal Wrath*: This is as great now as ever it was; and a being unfaithful in it, is as dreadful as ever. The Lord told *Ezekiel* that if he did not faithfully *warn the Wicked, they would die in their Iniquity, but their Blood ſhould be required at his Hand. Nevertheleſs, if he did faithfully warn them, and they would not turn: then they ſhould die in their Iniquity, but he had delivered his Soul*, Ezek. 33. 8, 9. So Miniſters in theſe Days, are ſet to watch for Souls, *as thoſe that muſt give an Account*, Heb. 13. 17.--- And immortal Souls are as precious now; and their Blood is as dreadful to anſwer for, as ever it was: O! therefore how can any one dare to enter into this great Work at any Time, without knowing that they are called and commiſſionated by him that is able, and faithful to carry them ſafely through it? Yea though they were invited into this Work by never ſo many of the Children of Men.

Again, the Work of feeding God's Flock (that

is dear to him as the Apple of his Eye) is as great now as ever it was. And as his Flock is ſo peculiarly dear to him; ſo he has always reſerved this Prerogative to himſelf alone, to chuſe out, and appoint meet Perſons over them to feed them. When our Saviour had been ſpeaking of the Importance and Bleſſedneſs of Saints ſtanding always on their Watch; *Peter* asked whether he ſpake that unto them, or even to all. In anſwer to which he ſpake ſomething to them concerning their particular Work. Luke 12. 35, to 43. *And the Lord ſaid, who then is that faithful and wiſe Steward, whom* HIS LORD SHALL MAKE RULER OVER HIS HOUSHOLD, *to give them their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon? Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing.* Here you ſee that it is the Lord that ſets Perſons over his Houſhold, to be *Stewards of the Myſteries of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 1. *and to feed his Sheep and Lambs*, Joh. 21. 15, 16. Alſo the Apoſtle plainly holds forth, to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, that they were ſet over that Flock by the ſpecial Call and Influences of the divine Spirit. Says he, *Take Heed therefore unto your ſelves, and to all the Flock over the which the* HOLY GHOST *hath* MADE YOU OVERSEERS, *to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood*, Acts 20. 28. How can it be truly ſaid that a Man is ſet over a Flock by the Holy Ghoſt, if they are not called into this Work by his ſpecial Influences? Without this, if all the Men in this World ſhould approbate them; yet in God's Sight they run before they are ſent.

I have not ſent theſe Prophets (ſays God) *yet they ran: I have not ſpoken to them, yet they propheſied*, Jer. 23. 21. O! how many Woes does the Lord denounce againſt falſe Paſtors in this Chapter? He ſays *they ſpeak Peace to his Enemies*, ℣ 17. *and propheſie Lies in his Name*: yet ſays he, *I ſent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they ſhall not profit this People at all*, (Ver. 32.) But he ſays he *will pour his Vengeance on them: and will deliver, and gather his People*; *and I will ſet up Shepherds over them, which ſhall feed them, and they ſhall fear no more, nor be diſmayed, neither ſhall they be lacking, ſaith the Lord*, Ver. 4. Now if we conſider what is ſaid in Ver. 7, 8, it will appear that what is here ſaid has a peculiar Reference to theſe laſt Times: ſo again, Ver. 20, *in the latter Days ye ſhall conſider it perfectly*. And I believe that the Time is drawing on, more and more, when the Lord will deliver his Flock from thoſe that devour them, inſtead of feeding of them, *Ezek.* 34.---- *And* HE *will give them Paſtors after his own Heart*, Jer. 3. 15.

Now then, to ſum up theſe Things in few Words: Since Goſpel-Miniſters now, perſonate the ſame eternal God that his Servants did of old; and ſince He is preſent with his Church to ſend them forth, as really now as formerly; ſince alſo Man is no more fit for it than heretofore; and the Work of watching for Souls as thoſe that muſt give Account, and of feeding God's Flock, is as great now as ever it was: Therefore I conclude, that in Order for Perſons rightly to

go into that Work in theſe Days, they muſt experience eſſentially the ſame Call from the *Lord of Hoſts*, that all his Meſſengers did in old Time.

CHAP. III.

The Nature of this Call explained.

IN the next Place I ſhall come on to ſpeak ſomething of the *Nature of this Call*, and ſhew what it is.

But here I would firſt obſerve, that as in Converſion, the Lord deals variouſly with different Perſons, as to the Means he uſes, and as to the length of Time that they are under Conviction, before the Work is accompliſhed; and alſo as to many Circumſtances that attend it; ſo that no Man can lay out an exact Method, and determine that every Soul which is ſavingly changed, muſt be led exactly in that particular Path: yet as to the Eſſence of the Change, all experience alike, that are truly converted: ſo it is in a Call to preach the Goſpel; the Means that are uſed, and many Circumſtances of it, may be very various, but the Subſtance of the Call is always the ſame.

One

One Thing more I would alſo premiſe before I go on: and that is, that it will be neceſſarily implied in the following Diſcourſe, *That a Man muſt be a real Saint, in order to his being truly called of God into this Work.*

I know not how I can expreſs my Thoughts better, in few Words, on this Point, than by uſing the Words of another*, as followeth, "God "has not, indeed, limited the Efficacy of Ordi- "nances by the Character of the Diſpenſer. "But yet the Scriptures warrant us to ſay, that "wicked Miniſters run unſent, and that God ge- "nerally frowns upon and blaſts their Labours, "*Pſal.* 50. 16. and *Jer.* 23. 21, 22, 23. When "Souls are entruſted to the Slaves of Satan, we "cannot but dread a bad Account of them; "for what Concern will theſe feel, or what Care "will they take, about the Salvation of others, "who feel no Concern for their own Salvation? "Miniſters are Men of God, (1 *Tim.* 6. 11.) "which ſurely imports Men devoted to his Ser- "vice, conformed to his bleſſed Image, zealous "for his Honour, animated by his Spirit, and "breathing after Communion and Fellowſhip "with him. But a Man of God, living with- "out God in the World! a Man of God, whoſe "Affections are earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh! "a Maſter of Iſrael, ignorant of the New- "Birth! *Joh.* 3. 10. A Guide to Zion, walking

* *See Mr.* John Erskine's *Sermon before the Synod at Glaſgow*, 1750. *P.* 4, 5.

"in

" in the Paths that lead to Deſtruction! a Sol-
" dier of Chriſt, in League with Satan, is a
" ſhocking and monſtrous Abſurdity.

Having mentioned theſe Things, I ſhall now come on to deſcribe what it is, *to have an internal Call to preach the Goſpel.*--- There is contained in it, a Diſcovery of the preſent State of God's People;--- The Treaſure of the Goſpel's being open'd and committed to the Soul,--- and God's Command therewith, to go and feed his Sheep and Lambs, with ſuch Clearneſs as to anſwer all Objections, and ſweetly and powerfully to conſtrain the Perſon to go into that great Work.

1. There is a Diſcovery of the preſent State of God's People. This is abſolutely neceſſary, in order for a Man's being able, rightly to perform his Work.--- The Work of God's Meſſengers is compared to that of a *Watchman*, both in the Old Teſtament and New, *Ezek.* 33. and *Heb.* 13. *&c.* Now it is eſſentially neceſſary, in order for a Watchman rightly to perform his Work, that he be firſt ſet where he can clearly view the State and Circumſtances of the Army, that he may ſee where they are expoſed, and when the Enemy is coming in. How abſurd a Thing would it be, for to ſet a Man for a Watchman that was blind: or to ſet one in a Place where he could ſee little or nothing of the Caſe of the People? Every whit as abſurd is it to ſet a Man to watch for Souls, who never was

ſpiritually

ſpiritually enlightned from above, and brought to ſee the preſent Caſe of the Church, and of the World of Mankind as it is.

Chriſt ſays of the Phariſees, *They be blind, Leaders of the blind*; and therefore they were all like to *fall into the Ditch*, Matt. 15. 14. And they ſhewed their Blindneſs greatly in this, *that they did not diſcern that Time*, Chap. 16. 3: and therefore they cried out againſt the great Friend of God's People, even *the Son of God himſelf*, inſtead of warning them againſt their Enemies. Now this Blindneſs, was not the want of human Wiſdom and Learning; for they had much of that: but it was the want of ſpiritual and divine Illuminations: as appears evident from *Luke* 10. 21. *Thou haſt hid theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt revealed them unto Babes*, &c. Indeed every Saint has ſome Views of theſe Things; but to thoſe which the Lord calls to be his Watchmen, he gives more ſpecial and clear Diſcoveries of them: and we may ſee ſomething of this, in the various Calls that we have a particular Account of in Scripture.

When the Lord called *Moſes* to go and lead *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; he ſhewed him clearly the Condition that they lay in, and what he now deſigned concerning them: ſays he, *I have heard the Cry of thy Brethren under their Bondage, and am come down to deliver them*, Exod. 3. 7, &c. So when the Lord came to call *Jeremiah*, he ſets before him the awful Caſe and Condition that the

Jews

Jews were then in, and the dreadful Desolations that were coming upon them, *Jer.* 1. 14. &c. The same he also shewed to *Ezekiel*, Ezek. 2.----This we may also observe in the New-Testament. In *Matt.* 9, latter end, our Saviour shews his Disciples how that *the Fields were white to the Harvest; but the Labourers were few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest to send forth Labourers*--- That is, he gave them a View of the Condition that immortal Souls lay in then, to stir up their Souls to thirst for their Deliverance, and to cry for their Help: and the next Thing is, he sends them forth to labour in this Field: as you may see in the beginning of the next Chapter. The like you may see in *Luke* 10--- where it appears, that not only the *Twelve*, but the *Seventy* were thus sent.

2. In this Call there is contained, a having the Treasure of the Gospel open'd and committed to the Soul.--- *How can they preach except they be sent? as it is written, how beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things*, Rom. 10. 15. Here the Apostle shews, not only the Necessity of their being sent, in order for them to preach aright; but also that those which are sent, have the Treasure of the Gospel, and glad Tidings committed to them, to bring to immortal Souls.

When the Lord sends any, he gives them their Errand: *Go* (says he to *Moses*) *and gather the Elders of Israel together, and say unto them,*

the

the Lord God of your Fathers,-- appeared unto me, ſaying, I have ſurely viſited you, and ſeen that which is done to you in Egypt. And I have ſaid I will bring you out of the Affliction of Egypt, unto the Land of the Canaanites, &c. Exod. 3. 16. &c. This having the Goſpel-Treaſure committed to us, is compared to receiving, and eating Food.

Thy Words were found (ſays *Jeremiah*) *and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the Joy and rejoycing of mine Heart*, Jer. 15. 16. And the Lord ſays to *Ezekiel*, *Son of Man eat that thou findeſt; eat this Roll, and go ſpeak unto the Houſe of Iſrael*, Ezek. 3. 1. And I apprehend that *John's eating the little Book*, and then being told that *he muſt propheſie before many People, and Nations, and Tongues, and Kings*, (Rev. 10. 10, 11.) implies in it ſomething more, than juſt his perſonal Miniſtry; and that it reaches to all thoſe that ſhall be called forth as God's Meſſengers afterwards, even until *Time ſhall be no longer*, (Ver. 6.) and till *the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed*, (Ver. 7.)

I know it is ſaid of Saints in general, that *they ſhall not live by Bread alone; but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God*, Matt. 4. 4. But his Miniſters not only eat it for their own Souls Nouriſhment, but they receive, as it were the whole Treaſure of the Word, to feed others with alſo. Hence the Lord ſays to *Ezekiel*, *Fill thy Bowels with this Roll that I*

give thee, Ezek. 3. 3. And the Apoſtle compares it to a Veſſel's being filled with Food, or Treaſure to feed others with: *We have this Treaſure in Earthen Veſſels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us*, 2 Cor. 4. 7.

By the Treaſure of the Goſpel's being committed to Men, I would not be underſtood, to hold forth, that they have an inherent Stock given them, ſo that they can do without conſtant Supplies from above. No, by no Means: for without conſtant Supplies from Chriſt, as *the Branch has from the Vine, we can do nothing*, Joh. 15. And to allude to the Similitude juſt now mention'd, we can no more feed God's People aright without his conſtant Help, than an Earthen Veſſel could convey Food to a Multitude, and diſtribute to each one their Portion, without a living Hand to uſe it. But yet each one that God ſends has his Promiſe, *that he will be with them alway, even unto the End of the World*, Matt. 28. 20. And that his *Grace ſhall be ſufficient for them*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. Therefore I will mention one Similitude more, and that is, they are called Stewards: *Stewards of the Myſteries of God*; 1 Cor. 4. 1. And *Stewards over God's Houſhold, to give them their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon*, Luke 12. 42. Now the Proviſions for the Houſhold are laid up in the Covenant of Grace in Chriſt Jeſus: but every one of his Miniſters, have the Key of God's Promiſe, by which he may (ſo to ſpeak) unlock this glorious Store-

Houſe;

House; and *find Grace to help in every Time of Need*, Heb. 4. 16. So that *being strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus*, (2 Tim. 2. 1.) he may *shew himself a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*, V. 15.

3. When a Person has thus a Discovery of the present State of Mankind, and has the Treasures of God's Word committed to him; God's Command comes therewith in such Clearness as to answer all Objections, and sweetly and powerfully to constrain him to go into this great Work. Now it is plain that where-ever the Lord gives a Talent, or Talents to any Souls, he commands them to improve it faithfully, Matt. 25. 14, &c. Luke. 19. 13. His Command is, *As every Man hath received the Gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 10.

But now a Soul that is brought to view the State of the Children of Men, and to see the Greatness of this Work; though he longs for their Salvation, more than for any Thing in this World, yet Nature will struggle, and many Objections will be ready to arise in his Mind, against going.

Moses pleaded his Meanness, *that he was not eloquent; and that the People would not believe that God had sent him*, &c. But the Lord answers him, by shewing the *Fulness of Help that is in Himself*, and promising to be with him, to carry

him

him through that weighty Work; and by his divine Authority, he overpowered all his Objections, and conſtrained *Moſes* to obey him, ſee *Exod.* 4.---- So *Jeremiah* ſays, *Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot ſpeak, for I am a Child.* But the Lord removes all his Objections with his Command, and his Promiſe, (which are ever join'd together in New-Covenant Language) *ſay not I am a Child: for thou ſhalt go to all that I ſhall ſend thee, and whatſoever I command thee thou ſhalt ſpeak. Be not afraid of their Faces: for I am with thee, to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord,* Jer. 1. 6, 7, 8.

I obſerved above, that the Lord deals variouſly with different Perſons, as to the Means and Manner of their Call; but ſomething of the Nature of theſe Things, is experienced by every one that he ſends forth. They have ſuch Views of the Condition that immortal Souls are in, and of the Glories of divine Truth, that they are conſtrained by divine Power, and are animated by Love to, and Zeal for the Good of the Children of Men, to go and (like *Apollos*) to ſpeak, and teach diligently the Things of the Lord: and that not only in private, but alſo boldly in the Synagogue, *Acts* 18. 24, 25, 26. Or in great Aſſemblies, when they can have Opportunity: which is one great Means, by which God's People obtain Satisfaction of their being ſent of Him; and ſo bid them God-ſpeed, as *Aquila*, and *Priſcilla*, and the Brethren at *Epheſus* did to *Apollos*, Ver. 27.

CHAP

CHAP. IV.

MARKS *by which* CHRIST'S *Miniſters may be known from all others.*

IT is likely that many when they read this Diſcourſe, may be ready to ſay, that to hold ſuch a Call as I plead for, will open a Door for Intruders: for many deluded Souls may fancy themſelves called of God, and how can we know who are called of God, and who not? Anſwer, Chriſt's Miniſters may be known from all Deceivers under Heaven; Firſt by their declaring the whole Counſel of God. Secondly, by their Lives being agreable thereto. Thirdly, by their Maſter's coming with them, and aſſiſting, and bleſſing of them in their Labours.

Firſt, They may be known by their preaching the whole Counſel of God. *Paul* ſays of himſelf, and his Companions, *We are not as many that corrupt the Word of God*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. And again, *We have renounced the hidden Things of Diſhoneſty, not walking in Craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifeſtation of the Truth, commending our ſelves to every Man's Conſcience in the Sight of God*, Chap. 4. 2. Without

out a Man brings this, all the Commendations that Men can give, will never ſatisfy a ſerious Perſon's Conſcience, that they are ſent of God. 'Tis *the Voice of a Stranger that Chriſt's Sheep will not follow*, Joh. 10.

One great Difference between true and falſe Teachers, lies in the Manner of their attempting the Change, and Reformation of Men. All hold that Men ſhould be *Holy*; and therefore Teachers in general, will in ſome ſort labour to make them ſo: But then one begins at the outſide, and the other within. Ignorant blind Guides will call Sinners to break off from groſs Sins; to reform their Lives, and make a Profeſſion of Religion, and the like; and then tell them that they are ſafe enough; at leaſt that they are in a fair Way: and *ſo they heal the Hurt of the Daughter of God's People ſlightly, ſaying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace*, Jer. 8. 11. But God's faithful Servants call Men to *make them a new Heart, and a new Spirit, as they would eſcape eternal Death*, Ezek. 18. 31. And alſo tell them that the Lord freely offers to do this great Work for them, *Chap.* 36. 26. This Difference is remarkable, clearly deſcribed by our Saviour, in his Diſcourſe to the Jewiſh Teachers.--- *Thou blind Phariſee, cleanſe* FIRST *that which is within,---that the outſide may be clean alſo*, Matt. 23. 26. Here obſerve, both are for cleanſing, but one would begin, (and indeed always continue) upon the outſide: but the other begins at the Heart. Men muſt be *created anew in Chriſt Jeſus*,

Jesus, in order for to do *good Works*, Eph. 2. 10. Hence faithful Ministers earnestly persuade Souls to fly immediately to Christ, and make no Delay. They tell them, *Behold, Now is the accepted Time, and Now is the Day of Salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. And *To Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts; least the Lord swear in his Wrath that you shall not enter into his Rest*, Heb. 3. 7. 8, 11. But blind Guides set Persons a long Task of seeking, and striving, and give them Encouragement that if they are found in the Way of Means, they shall obtain Salvation by and by: and thus they (like the Pharisees of old) set them to follow after Righteousness, in a Way that they are never like to attain unto the *Law of Righteousness*, and for this Reason, *because they seek it not by Faith, but as it were by the Deeds of the Law*, Rom. 9. 31, 32. *They sew Pillows to all Arm-Holes*, (Ezek. 13. 18.) for Souls to ease themselves upon, though they hang over Hell: and will apply the Promises in a false Manner; as for instance, that Promise in James 1. 5. *If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him*: This they will apply to Sinners, without telling them that they must *ask in Faith*, or not expect to receive any Thing from the Lord: as the next Words shew, Ver. 6, 7.

Objection, But what would you have us say to Sinners that do not believe? Must we bid them go on in Sin 'till God will convert them?

Answer,

Answer, No, by no Means; but call them to *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be saved*, Acts 16. 31.

Object. But they cannot believe.

Answer, Neither can they do good Works; for *without Faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. And *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, Rom. 14. 23.

Object. But however, is it not better to tell Sinners to do as well as they can?

Answer, Wouldest thou settle them down on their own Works, and so to lie under the *Curse of God's Law*? Gal. 3. 10. In short, the Case lies here; *Sinners will not come to Christ that they might have Life*, Joh. 5. 40. But they are *putting off 'till a more convenient Season*, Acts 24. 25. And they want to know which is best, either to go on in Duties, or in open Rebellion, 'till that Season comes. But there is no Place at all to rest in out of Christ; *for he that believeth not is condemned already:--- and the Wrath of God abideth on him*, Joh. 3. 18, 36. Therefore Sinners are to be warned to *fly for their Lives; and not to tarry least they be consumed*, Gen. 19. I mean not to beat Souls off from the Use of Means; but I would beat them off from resting in any Thing short of a living Union to Christ, by which alone they can have any Safety. If the Manslayer should have fled never so far; yea, even to the

Gate

Gate of the City of Refuge, and then had ſet down without the Walls, he would have been as much expoſed to be ſlain, as if he had never gone a Step, *Numb.* 35. 11, 27.

And as there is a great Difference betwee true and falſe Teachers in the Manner of their attempting to turn Men to God; ſo there is as much Difference between them, in the Way of their holding forth the Terms of Acceptance with Him. The one declares that *we are juſtified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law*, Rom. 3. 28. And that *we are accepted only in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. The other ſets Souls to doing as well as they can, and to prepare themſelves for Chriſt; and wait in the Way of Duty, and they may humbly hope that God will accept of them, and ſhew them Mercy by and by: it may be on a ſick Bed, or juſt as they are going into Eternity. Indeed they do not tell Souls right off in plain Terms that they muſt be juſtified by their own Works; but *they go about to eſtabliſh a Righteouſneſs of their own*, Rom. 10. 3. And *ſeek Juſtification as it were by the Deeds of the Law*, Chap. 9. 31. The falſe Teachers among the *Galations* would mention ſomething about Chriſt, but then they inſiſted on their doing ſome *Works of the Law*, in order for Acceptance with Him, and ſo they preached another Goſpel: which is not another; but they would pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt, Gal. 1. 6, 7. The Goſpel holds forth *Pardon*, *Juſtification*, and *Renewing Grace* intirely as *a free Gift from God*, Eph. 2. 8, 9, 10. And

the preparatory Work before Converſion, is quite another Thing than many conceive it to be. Many Teachers repreſent this to be, a *Fitneſs*, and ſome *good Qualifications* that a Perſon muſt get in himſelf, before he may think to come to Chriſt: and ſo they (as it were) ſet Souls to buy Chriſt, by their Tears, Repentings, &c. that Chriſt may buy Salvation for them. The preparatory Work that is wrought in the Soul before Converſion, is no more of an Excellency in the Creature; or Fitneſs for Grace and Mercy, than a Man's being brought to ſee and feel himſelf full of Sores, and dreadful Diſeaſes, is any Qualification in him to be healed, *Luke* 12. 32. Or, than a Man's ſeeing that he is ſo involved in Debt that he can no ways deliver himſelf, is any Fitneſs in him to have his Debts all forgiven, *Luke* 7. 42. Every Sinner's Caſe before he comes to Chriſt, is much like that of the Woman with a *bloody Iſſue*: *She had ſuffered many Things of many Phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe had, and was Nothing bettered, but rather grew worſe; then when ſhe heard of Jeſus, ſhe came and was healed*, Mark 5. 26, 27. So Sinners that are polluted in their Blood (Ezek. 16. 6.) muſt be made to ſee, that notwithſtanding all that they can do for themſelves, or that others can do for them, their Caſe grows worſe, before they will accept of Chriſt as he is offered in the Goſpel.

Once more; as there is a great Difference between true and falſe Miniſters, in the Manner of their eſſaying to turn Men to God; and in their

their teaching how they may be reconciled with Him: ſo there is as great Difference in the Method of their perſuading Saints to walk in his Ways.

Chriſt's Miniſters ever hold forth his Example, his dying Love, and the glorious Victory that he has gained, as the darling Motives to perſuade his Diſciples to walk in Holineſs. When *Paul* would give a full Anſwer to that grand Objection againſt the Doctrines of Grace, that they lead to Licentiouſneſs, he ſhews that as *Chriſt died unto Sin once, and roſe again; ſo we ſhould reckon ourſelves dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. 6.--- And he tells the *Corinthians*, that *the Love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto Him which died for them, and roſe again*, 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

But legal Teachers, tho' they mention Chriſt ſometimes, yet their common Way of preſſing home Duty upon God's People, is by repreſenting the Danger of periſhing if they do not perſevere in a Way of Obedience. Like the Judaizing Teachers, that told the Saints, that *except they kept the Law of Moſes they could not be ſaved*, which the Apoſtles call, *a ſubverting their Souls*, Acts 15. 24. And by the ſame Means, ſome Teachers among the *Galatians*, brought them Chriſtians into Bondage; for which Reaſon

Paul

Paul ſays, he *would they were even cut off which troubled them*: *for* (ſays he) *Brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty*,--- Gal. 5. 12, 13. Saints *have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear: but have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry Abba Father*, Rom. 8. 15. Indeed there is two ſorts of Fear, the one right, the other wrong; one flows from a Knowledge of God's Goodneſs: (*There is Forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared*, Pſal. 130. 4.) The other from Guilt, and an Apprehenſion of God's Anger (*I heard thy Voice, and I was afraid*, Gen. 3. 10.) One of theſe *is a Fountain of Life, to depart from the Snares of Death*; *and it has ſtrong Confidence in it*, Prov. 14. 26, 27. The other keeps the Soul always in Slavery:--- *Through Fear of Death, they are all their Life time ſubject to Bondage*, Heb. 2. 15.

On the other Hand, there are ſome Teachers, as well as Hearers, that will exclaim againſt Legality, and pretend to cry up *Free Grace* greatly; while in Reality, they *turn the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs*, Jude 4. And though they make a great Sound of Liberty, yet they are in Truth, the Servants of Corruption, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. But the Liberty of God's People, is to *walk in his Precepts*, (Pſal. 119. 45.) and therefore Chriſt's Meſſengers teach, that not only *the Law from Mount Sinai*, but alſo *the Grace of God that brings Salvation*,---*teaches us, that denying Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly, in this preſent World*: *and that they which*

have

have believed in the Lord, ſhould be careful to maintain good Works, Tit. 2. 11, 12. and 3. 8.

Farther, Falſe Teachers are like *Pharaoh's Task-Maſters, who required the full Tale of Bricks, but gave them no Straw,* Exod. 5. 10. *They lay heavy Burdens on Men's Shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their Fingers,* Matt. 23. 4.

But the Meſſengers of Chriſt, not only lay open what our Duty is; but alſo where our Strength lies to perform it, even in Chriſt as the *Life of the Branch is in the Vine*: And that *thro' his ſtrengthning of us, we can do all Things,* Phil. 4. 13. That *if any Man abides in the Doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son; and he that brings not this Doctrine, we muſt not receive into our Houſes, nor bid him God-ſpeed.* 2 Joh. 9. 10.

Thus I have juſt hinted at ſome few of the moſt eſſential Points of Truth, by which God's Meſſengers may be known in their Doctrine, from all Deceivers. I come,

Secondly, To ſhew, that another Mark by which Chriſt's true Ambaſſadors may be known from all Deceivers, is by their practiſing what they preach. *Elders are to be Enſamples to the Flock,* 1 Pet. 5. 3. And *Paul* could appeal to the *Theſſalonians,* (1 Theſ. 2. 5, 6, 8, 10.) *that they were Witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, juſtly, and unblamably, he and his Companions had behaved among them:* ſo that while others were after the Fleece,

inſtead

inſtead of the Flock, he could appeal to God, *that they had not uſed a Cloak of Covetouſneſs, nor ſought Glory of Men:* but the Motive they were influenced by, was ſuch a Love to their Souls, and Deſire for their Salvation, that they were willing not to impart the Goſpel only, but their own Souls alſo unto them.

Corrupt Miniſters often are diſcovered by their Sloth, and fleſhly Indulgencies; ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber: *Come, ſay they, I will fetch Wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong Drink, and to-morrow ſhall be as this Day, and much more abundant*, Iſai. 56. 10, 12. They do not ſearch after the Flock; but they feed themſelves inſtead of the Flock, Ezek. 34.---

But the Lord's Servants, approve themſelves as his Miniſters *in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Neceſſities, in Diſtreſſes, in Stripes, in Impriſonments, in Tumults, in Labours, in Watchings, in Faſtings*, &c, 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5, 6.

Again, falſe Meſſengers will frame their Meſſages, and their Religion, ſo as to pleaſe carnal Men, and to get the Honours of this World. *Wo unto you* (ſays Chriſt) *when all Men ſhall ſpeak well of you; for ſo did their Fathers to the falſe Prophets*, Luke 6. 22, 26. But to his Diſciples he ſays, *Bleſſed are ye when Men ſhall hate you, and reproach you*, &c.

Objection,

Objection, But we are told, that it is a neceſſary Qualification for a Goſpel-Miniſter, *that he have a good Report of them that are without*, 1 Tim. 3. 7.

Anſwer, The Apoſtle there is ſpeaking of Men's moral Conduct, of being ſober, not given to Wine, not a Brawler, nor covetous, &c. But our Saviour is ſpeaking of their Religion, and the Manner of their preaching: therefore theſe two may be clearly united in the ſame Perſon: as it was in *Daniel*. His Enemies, though they hated him, yet were forced to confeſs that they *ſhould find nothing againſt him, except it was concerning the Law of his God*, Dan. 6. 5. So that in one Word, he that has not his moral Conduct in a good Meaſure clear before the World, is not fit for an Officer in the Church of God: And on the other Hand, he that has his Religion and his Preaching framed in ſuch a Manner as to gain the Applauſe of the World, is in a woful Caſe.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Meſſengers may be known, by their Maſter's coming with them, to aſſiſt, and bleſs them in their Labours.---- This is promiſed in their Commiſſion: -- *Lo I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World*, Matt. 28. 20. By him they are aſſiſted to preach, *not with inticing Words of Man's Wiſdom, but in Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power*, 1 Cor. 2. 4. And by this the Lord ſaid his Meſſengers ſhould be known of old, when many run before they were ſent.

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Says he, *The Prophet that hath a Dream, let him tell a Dream; and he that hath my Word, let him ſpeak my Word faithfully: ---- Is not my Word like Fire? ſaith the Lord: and like a Hammer, that breaketh the Rock in Pieces*, Jer. 23. 28, 29. And when the Lord appears with his Servants, and bleſſeth their Labours for the Conviction and Converſion of Souls; it is a more ſure Proof that they are ſent of him, than if they had all the Letters of Commendation that Men could write. *We need not* (ſays *Paul* to the *Corinthians*) *Epiſtles of Commendation to you, or from you: Ye are are our Epiſtle*, &c. 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3. And again he ſays, *If I be not an Apoſtle to others, yet doubtleſs I am to you: for the Seal of mine Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 9. 2.

But there are two Objections that are often mentioned to diſprove this Mark.

One is, That it will condemn ſome of God's faithful Servants, in old Time, who were ſent to *make hard Hearts harder, and blind Eyes blinder.*

Anſwer, How can you harden Iron, but only by firſt heating of it? And how are God's Servants ſent to harden Sinners, but only by being faithful to them; and then they by reſiſting Conviction and Warnings, harden their own Hearts againſt God, and his Truth. Thus *Pharaoh* hardened his Heart from Time to Time: he was ſtruck under Conviction by *Moſes*'s preaching and working Miracles, and then turned and reſiſted

it,

it, and ſo hardened his Heart more and more, ſee *Exod.* 8. 8, 15, &c. And thus all the Lord's Servants, while they are *a Savour of Life to ſome*; they are *a Savour of Death to others*, 2 Cor. 2. 16.

But then this makes nothing againſt the Mark that we are pleading for,--- for thoſe who harden their Hearts againſt God and his Truth, are not likely to receive his Meſſengers: but thoſe that imbrace Chriſt, will know and receive them that he ſends, *Matt.* 10. 41.

The other Objection that many urge againſt this Mark is, that Deceivers may do great Things, *Propheſie, caſt out Devils*, &c. and therefore we cannot know Chriſt's Servants by their Aſſiſtance and Succeſs.

Anſwer, It is true, that *Balaam* had the Spirit of God upon him for a while, and ſpake wonderfully; and *Saul* was among the Prophets, &c. But then they were ſoon diſcovered, by their Fruits: yea, in the very Time of their Prophecying, there appeared plain Marks of a corrupt Diſpoſition of Mind, and that what they did was contrary to their Souls Choice. *Balaam loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. 2. 15; which plainly appeared then, by his going from Place to Place, to try if God would not alter his Mind, ſo that he might curſe *Iſrael* at laſt, and get *Balack*'s Reward, *Numb.* 23---And it appeared plain that what *Saul* was after, was to kill *David*, but

the Spirit of God came upon him ſo that he could not do it, 1 *Sam.* 14. 23, 24.

The Spirit of God may ſometimes bleſs what is ſpoken by corrupt Men for the Good of others: but I believe not ſo commonly as many would repreſent; and this Point of falſe-hearted Men's doing great Things on the Bodies and Souls of Men, I think is ſtrained vaſtly beyond what is true, by many in this Generation.

Many ſay that Deceivers may work Miracles, and convert many Souls, &c. And they will quote ſuch Places to prove it as that in Matth. 7. 22. *Many will ſay---Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name have caſt out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works?*---- And that in 1 Cor. 13. 2. *Though I have the Gift of Propheſie,--- and though I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.*

But after a great deal of ſearching the Scriptures, and ſeeking divine Inſtructions in theſe Things, it appears to me, that in that Place of our Saviour, he is ſhewing Perſons Deceptions and falſe Confidence, rather than that it was indeed ſo. They ſay, *Have we not caſt out Devils*, &c.--- Chriſt does not ſay they had; but ſays, *I know you not, depart from me*,--- And in that Paſſage of the Apoſtle, he is ſhewing how far Charity (or divine Love) exceeds all Gifts that Men may have here: and that if Perſons could have

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all thoſe Gifts to the higheſt Degree, and yet had not Charity, it would profit them nothing.---Yea he alſo prefers Charity above *ſaving Faith*, and a *good Hope*, Ver. 13. But then if we conſider what he ſays in the foregoing Chapter concerning Gifts, I think it will appear plain, that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of the Gifts that belong to Saints, that are all of one Body; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit, *Ver.* 12, 13. and not of what deluded Souls may have.

But as to corrupt Men's working Miracles, and doing much Good to others, though their Heart be not right with God; I believe that they and others are generally as much deceived about the Good that they do, as they are about their being true Men.

Chriſt ſays, *Take heed that no man deceive you; for there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, and ſhall ſhew great Signs and Wonders, inſomuch that (if it were poſſible) they ſhall DECEIVE the very Elect*, Matt. 24. 4, 24. The Signs and Wonders are falſe, as well as the Men that do them: which appears more evident, if we compare this with what *Paul* ſays to the *Theſſalonians*, concerning the ſame Enemy: Says he, *Whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power and Signs, and LYING Wonders: and with all DECEIVABLENESS of Unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 9, 10.

Thus I have in Simplicity ſpoken my Mind upon

upon these Things: and considering what is spoken concerning *Sceva*'s Sons attempting to cast out Devils in Christ's Name; and the Confusion that they met with therein, *Acts* 19. 13---16. And on the other Hand, that those who did in Reality cast them out in Christ's Name; he tells them to *rejoyce that their Names were written in Heaven*, Luke 10. 17, 20. I say, considering these and many other such like Things in Scripture, I must freely own that it appears to me a very hard Thing to prove, that in Reality there ever was such a Thing as an unsanctified Man's being properly the Instrument of healing any Person's Body that was possessed with the Devil, in a miraculous Way.

But this is not so much to our present Purpose; for the healing of Men's Bodies is but a small Thing, to the healing of the Soul; which is the main Thing that I am after. Therefore to return:--- This Point still stands good, that it is one very clear Proof that a Man is sent of God, to preach the Gospel, when his Master comes with him, and assists and blesseth him in his Labours for the Conversion and Edification of Souls. And whatever may be said of unconverted Men's having the Spirit of God upon them, and of their speaking wonderfully: yet Men must raise a pretty many Texts out of the Bible, before they can make that Doctrine to stand good which many assert, *That a Man may be instrumental of turning many to God, and yet may afterwards perish forever.* What will these Men do with

with ſuch Texts as that in *Prov.* 11. 30. *He that wineth Souls is wiſe: And they that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament: and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever?* Dan. 12. 3.

Indeed this, as well as other Truths, may, and undoubtedly is, abuſed by ſome: as when any hold, that when the Lord is with and bleſſeth a Perſon, that then, all which they hold and practiſe is right:--- This is a very groſs Miſtake, for Men are always (in a greater or leſs Degree) imperfect, both in their Principles and Practice, while in this imperfect State. But then it is the ſtrongeſt Proof that we can have, that a Man is ſent of God into this Work, when the Lord himſelf comes with him, and ſays to him (as he does to all his Meſſengers) *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me,* Matt. 10. 40.

This Head includes both of the other: for a Man cannot preach God's Truth clearly and as he ought, nor practice agreable thereto; neither is he like to be ſucceſsful in his Labours, without having God preſent with him.--- The Lord ſays of *Levi, He walked with me in Peace and Equity, and did turn many away from Iniquity,* Mal. 2. 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

OBJECTIONS *answered.*

WHEN any Point of Truth is held up which has been generally shut out by Mankind in Time past, it is a common Thing to have many Objections raised against it Therefore (though I know that a Man may as easily stop the Winds from blowing with his Words, as to still all the Cavals of such as do not love to receive the Truth, yet for the Good of Persons that have a more serious Mind) I will here set down as short and clear an Answer as I can, to the most material Objections that I have heard mentioned against the Call which I have been pleading for in this Discourse.

Objection I. In this Discourse you seem to set them which you hold to be Christ's Ministers, up equal to the Prophets and Apostles who were called in an extraordinary Way.

Answer 1. All true Ministers of Christ now, are sent forth by the same eternal God that the Prophets and Apostles were, and therefore they have their Call and Commission made clear and sealed

to

to them by the Work of the ſame Spirit on their Hearts; and thoſe that have not this, let them not pretend to be Meſſengers from the ſame divine King. But then I obſerved before, that there were ſome Things in the Call and Work of God's Servants of old that we have not now; eſpecially in their being called, and inſpired to write the Scriptures. Yet we may, and ought to reach after as great and greater Degrees of Grace and Strength to act for God, and to labour for the Advancement of his Kingdom, than they had in old Time. *David* was an eminent Servant of the Lord, and did Wonders among his People: but yet God ſays concerning his Church in latter Times, that *the feeble among them at that Day, ſhall be as David; and the Houſe of David ſhall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them*, Zech. 12. 8.

Anſw. 2. I will appeal to all Men of Reaſon and Conſcience to judge, who ſets themſelves up equal to (nay above) the Prophets and Apoſtles; thoſe who hold that they are not fit to be God's Counſellers, nor to appoint whom he ſhall have for his Meſſengers; but that they are only to own and receive whomſoever he ſends: Or they which declare that the Power is now left in their Hands to authorize Goſpel-Miniſters; and that all who preach without their Licence, *run before they are ſent*: which Power never was given to the Servants of God heretofore; and when the Diſciples went to aſſume it, Chriſt ſeverely checked them therefor, Mark. 9. 38, 39.

Objection,

Objection, II. But the Apoſtle ſeems to hold forth, that ſince the Days of Inſpiration are ceaſed, the Work is put into the Hands of Miniſters to ordain others, and ſo the Power is tranſmitted down in an ordinary Way: hence he ſays to *Timothy*, *The Things that thou has heard of me among many Witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful Men, who ſhall be able to teach others alſo*, 2 Tim. 2. 2.

Anſw. This Text proves clearly, that Goſpel Miniſters ſhould be ordained, and publickly ſet apart in the Church, and I have no where denied it. Alſo it gives the Character of the Perſons that are to be ordained. *They muſt be faithful Men, or Men full of Faith and the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts 6. 5. Which at once cuts off the Notion of unconverted Men's being Miniſters of Chriſt. They are called of God, and made faithful in his Work before they can be rightly received and ordained as Officers in his Church. Now as to where the Right of Ordination lies, whether in Miniſters by themſelves, or in them and the Church as a united Body together:--- this is another Queſtion which I ſhall not enter upon here. † A Man's being internally called of God is one Thing; and his being openly received, and ſet apart in the Church is quite another: and I defy all Men under Heaven to prove from Scripture, that God

† *See this Point clearly handled in* Ebenezer Frothingham's *Diſcourſe on the Privileges of the Church of Chriſt.* Printed at *Newport* 1750. *p.* 163--204.

has

has any more left it in the Hands of any mortal Men whatſoever to ſay who ſhall be his Miniſters, and who not, than he has to ſay who ſhall be his Children and who not. The Argument that is raiſed from the Scriptures being compleat, is as good in one Caſe as the other. For it is no more recorded in the Bible that this, or that Perſon is, or ever ſhall be converted, than it is that this, or that Man is, or ſhall be called to preach the Goſpel. We have plain Marks given us whereby we may know them that the Lord has called into the Kingdom of his Grace: and ſo we have alſo Rules whereby we may know them that he has called to be his Meſſengers.

But if it be true, that the Lord does not now by his divine Spirit, as really ſhew his Children their ſtanding, or their Duty, and the Work that he calls them to, as he did to his Servants of old: then why do we talk of the Bible's being a Privilege, for we are vaſtly worſe of it than they were before it was written? Alas! the Darkneſs that has overſpread the World in theſe Days! Darkneſs that may be felt. Yet, bleſſed be the Lord, he will cauſe his Light and Glory to ſhine upon his People, though Darkneſs covers the Earth, &c. *Iſai.* 60.

Objection III. Some may yet ſay, That to hold to ſuch an internal Call as this, will deſtroy all Order in the Church, for when Men get a Notion that they are called of God, they will not only

preach, but alſo adminiſter the Ordinances, and run into all manner of Confuſion, and none can controul them.

Anſw. 1. This is no juſt Conſequence at all, for it is plain that the Holy Ghoſt commanded the Church at *Antioch* to ſeparate two Men for a Work whereunto he had called them; which was to *go and preach and baptize among the Gentiles*: In Obedience to which the Church publickly ordained them, *Acts* 13. 2, 3. And yet one of them Perſons tells us, that long before this he had ſuch a Call by God's Spirit, *that he did not confer with Fleſh and Blood*; neither go to them that were Apoſtles before him, but he went directly to preaching, *Gal.* 1. 15, 16, 17.

Anſw. 2. The Reaſon and Nature of the Thing ſhews plainly, that holding to an internal Call, no ways invalidates external Ordination in the leaſt: for as when a Soul is converted, though he has an internal Right to all the Privileges of the Church of Chriſt; yet he has not an external Right thereto, 'till he is openly received as a Member: So a Perſon that is called to preach, has not a Right to act in thoſe Things which are peculiar to an Officer in the Church, 'till he is publickly ſet apart therein.

Praying, exhorting, and Preaching, though they are Duties to be performed in the Church, yet they are not ſo confined thereto, but that they may be rightly

rightly performed where there is no particular Church at all: which might be eaſily ſhewn, were it needful to ſtand upon it. But the adminiſtring of ſpecial Ordinances, and acting in Church Diſcipline, are Things peculiar to a viſible Church, and therefore we cannot clearly act in them without we have a viſible ſtanding therein, as an Officer, or a Member. — *For what have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?* 1 Cor. 5. 12.

Objection IV. But if you hold that you have the ſame Call with the Prophets and Apoſtles, why don't you work Miracles as they did to confirm your Miſſion?

Anſw. I hinted before, that many Miracles and great Things which were wrought by God's Servants of old, were chiefly done to confirm the Truth of the Tidings which they brought, to ſuch as had not received thoſe Parts of God's Word before. Thus the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, in mentioning the great Salvation, *which began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him*, ſays, *God alſo bearing them Witneſs, both with Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt*, Heb. 2. 3, 4. So when the Apoſtles firſt went forth, *the Lord confirmed the WORD with Signs following*, Mark 16. 20. From which it plainly appears, that thoſe Things were chiefly given to confirm the Meſſages which they brought, though undoubtedly there was a Confir-

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mation of the Meſſengers Miſſion contained therein. But in our Days, when Men declare Things concerning the great Salvation; Unbelievers have as good Reaſon to demand a Miracle to prove that what they ſay is true, as Cavillers have to ſay, If you are thus ſent forth by the Lord, confirm your Miſſion by ſome extraordinary Sign.

And further, it is very evident that the Apoſtles looked upon their Succeſs in converting Souls, to be a far greater, and more certain Proof of their being ſent of God, than all the Miracles which they wrought on Men's Bodies. Thus when *Paul* would mention to the *Corinthians* an undeniable Evidence of his being an Apoſtle of Chriſt, he ſays, *The Seal of mine Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 9. 2. and 2 Cor. 3. 1—3. So that thoſe who have the Scripture Marks which are mention'd above, bring the cleareſt Evidences of their being ſent of Chriſt that we can have.

Objection V. You ſpeak much concerning a Miniſter's Call, but ſay little about his Qualifications, which is the main Thing; for a Man muſt have Learning and the underſtanding of the original Tongues, or elſe he does not know whether he preaches right or wrong.

Anſw. 1. If a Man's having the Treaſure of God's Word open'd and committed to his Soul; and having ſuch a View of the Worth of Souls, as to be conſtrained by divine Power and Love, to go

and

and ſpend his Life and Strength for God's Glory, and in labouring for their Good: (*2 Cor.* 5. 14 *Joh.* 21. 15, 16, 17. *2 Cor.* 12. 15.) I ſay, if theſe Things are not Goſpel Qualifications, I know not what are; yea ſuch neceſſary Qualifications, as that without them, if a Man had all the Learning that Men can give, he would be no ways fit for this great Work.

Anſw. 2. As to the Knowledge of the original Tongues, though I do not deſpiſe it; for no doubt that may be improved to ſome Benefit, under the Influence of the Spirit of God: Yet I am far from thinking it to be ſo eſſentially neceſſary as many would repreſent.

For though I have heard many (both Miniſters and others) aſſert, that without the Knowledge of the original Tongues, a Man could not know whether he preached Truth, or Falſhood: yet I ſhall not only aſſert, but prove, that every Saint now has the ſame Way to know the Truth and Certainty of God's Word that his People had of old: without which all the Learning in this World, will never bring any Man to know certainly the Truth of the Scriptures.

Chriſt told his Diſciples that *the Spirit of Truth would guide them into all Truth*, Joh. 16. 13. And when the *Jews* ſaid of him, *How knoweth this Man Letters, having never learned?* Chriſt (after aſſerting that his Doctrine was not his own, but his that ſent

ſent him) ſays, *If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall* KNOW *of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf*, Joh. 7. 17. The Way that the *Theſſalonians knew, and received the Goſpel not as the Word of Man, but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, was by its coming to them in Power, and in the* HOLY GHOST, *and in much Aſſurance*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 13. and 1. 5. Once more; *Paul* tells the *Corinthians* (who reckoned as much upon Learning and Wiſdom as many do in this Day) *That he determined to know nothing among them, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified, and* (ſays he) *my Speech, and my Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom, but in Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power.* And again, *What Man knows the Things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of Man that is in him? Even ſo the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God. Which Things alſo we ſpeak, not in the Words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but which the HOLY GHOST teacheth; comparing ſpiritual Things with ſpiritual. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. 2. 2, 4, 11——14.

This is the only Way by which God's People in every Age have known the Truth and Certainty of his Word: which hath been given in to by

Proteſtants

Proteſtants in general both at Home and Abroad ſince the Reformation.— The *Weſtminſter Confeſſion of Faith*, after mentioning ſundry Arguments that may induce us to believe the Scriptures, ſay, "Yet "notwithſtanding our full Perſwaſion and Aſſur- "ance of the infallible Truth, and divine Autho- "rity thereof, is from the inward Work of the "Holy Spirit, bearing Witneſs by and with the "Word in our Hearts." *Chap.* 1. *Sect.* 5.

If we cannot know certainly that the Bible is true, without underſtanding of *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin* (which *Pilate* ſet over Chriſt's Head, when he was crucified, *Luke* 23. 38. *Mat.* 27. 37.) then alas! we are in a woful Caſe indeed: for (according to this) if we hear a Man preach, that ſays he knows not only them Tongues, but twenty more beſide, and he tells us that this or that is Truth; we have only a Man's Teſtimony for it: and God ſays we worſhip him in vain, when our Fear is taught by the Precepts of Men, *Pſal.* 29. 31. compar'd with *Matth.* 15. 9. But it is the common Privilege of God's People (and then much more of his Meſſengers) to have the divine Spirit given them, to ſeal his Truth to their Hearts; without which, if a Perſon has never ſo many of the learned Tongues, how does he know that them Books which we call the Word of God, are not *cunningly deviſed Fables*, and nothing but a Piece of Prieſt-Craft? as ſome Men of great human Learning really call them. Or if he allows that they were firſt written by the Direction of God's Spirit, yet how

how does he know that they have not been altered ſince; for he has not the firſt Copies? If it ſhould be ſaid, that great Care has been taken to tranſmit them down to us without any Alteration. I anſwer, ſo has there been great Care and Pains uſed in tranſlating them into our Language as exactly as poſſible.

As for the Argument that many bring from the Apoſtles having the miraculous Gift of Tongues given them, to prepare them to preach among the Gentiles,—for to prove that Men muſt learn theſe Tongues now, before they may preach among us; I can ſee no Reaſon in it at all. To them was given the Knowledge of the Peoples Languages, that they were to preach to: and ſo undoubtedly Perſons now muſt have ſome clear underſtanding of the Meaning and Uſe of the Tongue he ſpeaks in, or elſe he will be a Barbarian to his Hearers, and they to him, 1 *Cor.* 14. 11. This Argument is much ſtronger to prove that Men in our Land ought to learn the *Indian* Tongue, or other Languages in theſe Parts of the World, before they preach, that they might be able to hold forth Salvation to ſuch poor Souls; than it is to prove that Men muſt learn *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin*, before they may preach to Engliſh Hearers. But ſome will ſay, that though the Bible is very well tranſlated into our Language, yet a clear underſtanding of the original Tongues may be of Benefit; as a Perſon thereby may be able to view the different Readings that there are in ſome Places, and ſo may illuſtrate

illuſtrate ſome Things more clearly than others can.

To which I reply, that I allowed this before, that ſuch Knowledge may by the Help of the divine Spirit, be improved for the Good of others: but then that is no Argument againſt every one's improving the Gift which God has given him: for each Soul will have a dreadful Account to give up, if they do not faithfully improve every Talent which their Maſter hath given into their Hands, *Matt.* 25. 15. *Luke* 19. 13. Yet let no Man pretend to what he has not; nor put what he has in a wrong Place: both of which are Abomination to the Lord. Spare me a Word to each of theſe, and I will have done with this Head.

Firſt, Let no Man pretend to that he has not; which certainly is the Caſe of ſome, if not many in this Land, with Regard to this Matter. They pretend that none may preach without they underſtand the original Tongues: and yet many take their Degrees at College, and are ordained, who have no clear underſtanding of the *Hebrew* Tongue at all (in which above half the Bible was written) ſo that according to their own Plea, they muſt never preach out of the Old-Teſtament: if they do, they know not whether they preach right or wrong. And further, ſundry Perſons that have gone thro' the College, and are well acquainted with theſe Things, I have heard own, that there is not one to ten among their Scholars that are ſuch Maſters

of the original Tongues, as to be able to make any Corrections, if in any Places the Scriptures are not tranſlated exactly right: but they poſſibly will read the Remarks of ſome learned Expoſitor (which common Engliſhmen can read) and then impoſe upon the common People, with a Pretence of knowing much about the original of the Bible.

Again,

Secondly, What Learning Men have is often put in a wrong Place,—namely, to ſupply the want of the Spirit of God, who alone can teach us all Things; as no Man can teach us, 1 *Joh.* 2. 27. *But the World by Wiſdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. Many ſeem to make more of human Wiſdom and Learning, than of the Spirit of God, to lead them into an underſtanding of his Word; which naturally leads to that which *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of, that in a great Meaſure is actually the Caſe in our Day: to wit, "That the Myſteries of the Scriptures become to "all as a ſealed Book; which the unlearned ſay, "they cannot read becauſe they are not learned; "and the Learned cannot read becauſe it is ſealed. "Therefore (the Lord ſaid) behold, I will pro- "ceed to do a marvellous Work amongſt this Peo- "ple, even a marvellous Work and a Wonder: "for the Wiſdom of their wiſe Men ſhall periſh, "and the underſtanding of their prudent Men ſhall "be hid. Wo unto them that ſeek deep to hide "their Counſel from the Lord, and their Works "are in the Dark, and they ſay, who ſeeth us? "and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of "Things upſide down ſhall be eſteemed as the

Potters

" Potters Clay :— In that Day ſhall the deaf hear
" the Words of the Book, and the Eyes of the
" blind ſhall ſee out of Obſcurity, and out of Dark-
" neſs. The Meek alſo ſhall increaſe their Joy in
" the Lord, and the POOR among Men ſhall
" rejoyce in the Holy One of Iſrael, *Iſai.* 29. 11,
" 12, 14,——16, 18, 19.

One Objection more I will ſpeak a little to, and then draw toward a cloſe.

Objection VI. Many *Enthuſiaſts* and deluded People have held to ſuch a Call as you ſpeak of, but none that have been accounted ſound and orthodox Divines in latter Days, have pretended to any ſuch Thing.

Anſw. 1. That many People have held falſe Notions about a Call to preach the Goſpel, is an undoubted Truth to me; and many have run into great Deluſions concerning ſuch Things: but then that is no more of a good Argument againſt this, than it is againſt all Religion. There is no Point in experimental Religion, as I know of, but what has been abuſed: and how many awful Deluſions have ſome run into concerning Converſion, and the Teachings of God's Spirit, in every Age? Yet that is no Argument againſt the Reality of Religion at all: for if *Hymenius* and *Philetus*, and a thouſand more, run into never ſo great Errors, and *overthrow the Faith of ſome: yet nevertheleſs, the Foundation*

of

of God ſtandeth ſure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. 2. 19.

Anſw. 2. If none that have been eſteemed ſound Divines in latter Ages have held to ſuch a Call by the Spirit of God,— What Warrent did the firſt Reformers from *Popery* go upon in preaching before there were Proteſtant Churches gathered? If any ſay, they were ordained by the Papiſts, I reply, that if they had no better Call than Antichriſt could give them, they went upon a very poor Authority. And farther, it is an undoubted Truth that the ſame Power that can give a Commiſſion, can take it away: and it is certain that the Pope did his utmoſt, not only to depoſe them, but alſo to deſtroy their Lives if poſſible; yet ſtill they went on boldly in preaching in their Maſter's Name, notwithſtanding all the Rage of Earth and Hell.

And if the firſt Reformers in *England* did not hold to ſuch an internal Call, what did they mean by inſiſting upon it, that every one which they ordained, ſhould profeſs, *that he was inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take that Work upon him?*— I doubt not but many of them knew experimentally what it was to be called and inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt, to go into that great Work of preaching the Goſpel, though I fear that many who have uſed that Form of Words ſince, have not known neither what they ſaid, nor whereof they affirmed.

One

One particular Inſtance of an internal Call, I will here ſet down, which was experienced about an hundred Years ago, by one who, though he be deſpiſed by ſome learned Men, yet is generally eſteemed and looked upon among the Godly, as a very excellent Writer, and an eminent Servant of Jeſus Chriſt: *John Bunyan*, in giving an Account of God's Dealings with him (in his Book intitled *Grace abounding*, &c.) after mentioning the earneſt Deſires of many, that he ſhould preach, ſays, that "about that Time he did evidently find in his "Mind a ſecret pruking forward thereto; though "(ſays he) I bleſs God, not from a Deſire of Vain-"Glory, for at that Time I was moſt ſorely afflict-"ed with the fiery Darts of the Devil concerning "my eternal State. But yet could not be content "unleſs I was found in the Exerciſe of my Gift, "unto which I was greatly animated, not only by "the continual Deſires of the Godly, but alſo by "that Saying of *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *I beſeech* "*you Brethren (ye know the Houſhold of Stephanus,* "*that it is the firſt Fruits of Achaia, and that they* "*have addicted themſelves to the Miniſtry of the* "*Saints) that ye ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch, and* "*to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth,* "1 Cor. 16. 51, 16.— By this Text I was made "to ſee that the Holy Ghoſt never intended, that "Men who have Gifts, and Abilities, ſhould bury "them in the Earth, but rather did command and "ſtir up ſuch to the Exerciſe of their Gift, and "alſo did commend thoſe that were apt ſo to do. "*They have addicted themſelves to the Miniſtry of*

"*the*

" *the Saints* : this Scripture in thoſe Days did con-
" tinually run in my Mind, to encourage me, and
" ſtrengthen me, in this my Work for God. I
" have alſo been encouraged from ſeveral other
" Scriptures, and Examples of the Godly, both
" ſpecified in the Word, and other ancient Hiſto-
" ries. *Acts* 8. 4. and 18. 24, 25. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10.
" *Rom.* 12. 6. *Fox's* Acts and Monuments."

And further on he ſays, " Though I will not
" now ſpeak all that I know in this Matter, yet
" my Experience hath more Intereſt in that Text
" of Scripture, *Gal.* 1. 11, 12. than many amongſt
" Men are aware."

Much more might be ſaid here, but I ſhall not ſtand upon it now, becauſe that though ſerious People do not ſlight and diſregard the Practice of the Godly in paſt Ages, yet when viewing Things aright, they will follow them as far, and no farther than they followed Chriſt. The Scriptures plainly repreſent that the Church of God in theſe latter Days, will get Victory over the Corruptions of Antichriſt gradually, and by Degrees.

They get Victory, firſt over the *Beaſt*; then over his *Image*; thirdly, over his *Mark*, and laſtly over the *Number of his Name*. Rev. 15. 2.

That allowing the Caſe, that many of the Fathers had not ſo clear Views of the Nature of theſe Things, yet that is no juſt Objection againſt what

has

has been here ſaid, unleſs this can be made appear to be contrary to God's Word. To this purpoſe I ſhall here ſet down a Paſſage from Mr. *Robinſon*, who was the firſt Paſtor of the Church that came firſt to *New England*, and ſettled in *Plymouth*. Part of the Church came over from *Holland* before the other, and Mr. *Robinſon* ſtayed behind with the reſt: And at their parting,

Governor *Winſlow* ſays, † "He charged us be-
" fore God and his bleſſed Angels, to follow him
" no further than he followed Chriſt. And if
" God ſhould reveal any thing to us by any other
" Inſtrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as
" ever we were to receive any Truth by his Mi-
" niſtry: for he was very confident the Lord had
" more Truth and Light yet, to break forth out of
" his holy Word. He took Occaſion alſo miſera-
" bly to bewail the ſtate of the reformed Churches
" who were come to a Period in Religion, and
" would go no further than the Inſtruments of
" their Reformation. As for Example, the *Lu-*
" *therans* could not be drawn to go beyond what
" *Luther* ſaw; for whatever part of God's Word
" he had further revealed to *Calvin*, they had ra-
" ther die than embrace it: and ſo ſaid he, you
" ſee the *Calviniſts*, they ſtick where he left them,
" a Miſery much to be lamented: for though
" they were precious, ſhining Lights in their
" Times; yet God had not revealed his whole

† *See Mr.* Prince's *New-England Chronology*. P. 89, 90.

" Will

" Will to them : and were they now alive, said he, " they would be as ready to embrace further Light, " as that they had received. Here also he put us " in mind of our Church-Covenant ; whereby we " engaged with God and one another, to receive " whatever Light, or Truth should be made " known to us from his written Word. But withal " exhorted us to take heed what we received for " Truth ; and well to examine, compare and weigh " it with other Scriptures before we receive it. For " said he, it is not possible the Christian World " should come so lately out of such Antichristian " Darkness, and that full perfection of Knowledge " should break forth at once."

These are the Sentiments of my Heart ; and according to this, let what I have here written be tried. If I have said any thing contrary to the Scriptures of Truth, let it be condemned ; if not, what does a thousand Traditions of Men avail to overthrow it ? — *All Flesh is Grass, and all the Goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field. — The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth : but the Word of our God shall stand forever.* Isaiah 40. 6, 8.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Some Improvement of the whole, with Obſervations on the Principles and Practices of many in this Age, concerning theſe Things.

I Shall now cloſe this Diſcourſe with ſome few Reflections on what has been ſaid.

USE I. Is it ſo, that Chriſt's Meſſengers now have eſſentially the ſame Call that all his Servants had of old? We may hence ſee the woful and lamentable Caſe of many in this Generation, who have (in a great Meaſure, if not wholly) ſet aſide the Work of God's Spirit, and the Kingly Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, in calling and ſending forth his Miniſters, and have ſet up mortal Man in his Room:—which appears evident in theſe following Particulars.

1. In that they hold, that Chriſt has now left it with his Miniſters to Licence and ſend forth others, and that whoever goes to preach without that, run

before they are ſent. They do not only hold that Preachers ſhould be examined by the Church and Miniſters of Chriſt; and ſo be received, and publickly ordained, if they are found faithful; or be rejected if otherwiſe, (which I believe is agreeable to Goſpel Rule) but they alſo hold, that it is this alone that gives them their Commiſſion and Authority. Hence I have often heard it, both from the Pulpit, and in Converſation aſſerted, that *The Call of Man is the Call of God.* — Which I take to be a moſt horrid Way of ſetting Man up in God's Place.

Indeed we all hold that God ſometimes ſpeaks by his Spirit, in and through his People: and what is thus ſpoken is his Voice. He told *Elijah* that he ſhould anoint [or call forth] *Eliſha* to be Prophet in his Room. 1 *Kings* 19. 16. And I think it appears evident, that *Timothy* was thus called forth, if we compare *Acts* 16. 3. *Him would* Paul *have to go forth with him*; — with 1 *Tim.* 1. 18. *This Charge I commit unto thee, Son* Timothy, *according to the* PROPHECIES *which went before on thee.* And again, *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by* PROPHECY, *with the laying on of the Hands of the* Preſbytery, chap. 4. 14. And I ſuppoſe it is generally allowed that Mr. *Davidſon* was guided by the divine Spirit, when he charged Mr. *John Ker* (a young Gentleman who had no Thoughts of the Miniſtry before) to caſt off his Scarlet Cloak, and lay aſide his gilded Rapper, and take him to his Book, "For (ſaid he)

"you

" you are the Man who is to ſucceed me in the " Miniſtry at this place." Which accordingly came to paſs. † God alſo often teaches and guides his People in a more ordinary Way: but then to ſay that whatever is acted by his profeſſing People is the Voice of God, is notoriouſly falſe. Many were called Prophets among God's People of old, which they choſe, and loved their Preaching, that yet he ſays, *They ran, but he ſent them not, nor commanded them.* Compare *Jer.* 5. 31, with *Chap.* 23. 21, 32. Yea the greateſt Saints often are miſtaken. *Samuel*'s looking on the ſtately Appearance of *Jeſſe*'s eldeſt Son, and ſaying, *Surely the Lord's anointed is before him*, 1 Sam. 16. 6. did not make *Eliab* to be the Leader that God choſe for his People. —

But notwithſtanding the beſt of Men are ſuch frail Creatures, yet Mr. *Fiſh* of *Stonington* is ſo bold as to aſſert (after commenting a while on that Text, 2 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2.) that " Chriſt Jeſus does not com- " mit the preaching of the Goſpel to any Man; " ſince the Apoſtles, but by the Inſtrumentality " of others." * He holds, that Chriſt himſelf committed this Work to the Apoſtles, and to his firſt Miniſters, but not to any now, only through and by Inſtruments. Which Scheme, as I believe it to be grounded upon Tradition, and not upon

† *Vid. Fulfilling of the Scripture*; Boſton *Edition*, P. 411.

* *See his Sermon at Mr.* Vinal's *Ordination at* Newport, *October* 29. 1746. P. 25. 26.

Scripture;

Scripture: So it evidently (like their Traditions of old) croſſes God's Commandment; or in other Words; they make void God's Law to keep their own Traditions.

This you may ſee ſomething of in what Mr. *Edwards* ſays of theſe Things, in his Thoughts on the Work of God in *New England*, 1741,2. P. 264. &c. He holds it to be an Error for any to think "That the Goſpel-Miniſtry need "not to be limited as it uſed to be, to Perſons of a "liberal Education; (ſays he) ſome of late have "been for having others that they have ſuppoſed "to be Perſons of eminent Experience, publickly "licenced to preach, yea and ordained to the "Work of the Miniſtry; and ſome Miniſters have "ſeemed to favour ſuch a Thing: but how little "do they ſeem to look forward and conſider the "unavoidable Conſequences of opening ſuch a "Door?—It will be found of abſolute Neceſſity "that there ſhould be ſome certain viſible Limits "fixed, to avoid bringing Odium upon our ſelves, "and breeding Uneaſineſs and Striſe amongſt "others; and I know of none better, and indeed "no other that can well be fixed, than thoſe that "the Prophet *Zechariah* fixes, viz. that thoſe only "ſhould be appointed to be Paſtors, or Shepherds "in God's Church, that have been taught to keep "Cattle from their Youth; or that have had an "Education for that Purpoſe.—Not but that there "may probably be ſome Perſons in the Land, that "have had no Education at College, that are in "them-

" themſelves BETTER QUALIFIED for the Work " of the Miniſtry than ſome others that have taken " their Degrees, and are now Ordained. But yet " I believe the breaking over thoſe Bounds that " have hitherto been ſet, in ordaining ſuch Per- " ſons would in its Conſequences be a greater Ca- " lamity, than the miſſing ſuch Perſons in the " Work of the Miniſtry." Thus far he.—Now though I highly eſteem this Man, as an eminent Servant of the Lord, and believe the main of that Book to be clear Truth: yet I deſire never to have ſuch an eſteem of any Man, as to take what they ſay for Truth, when it appears evidently to be contrary to God's Word: which I think is the Caſe here.

He mentions *Zech.* 13. 5. as a Deſcription of Goſpel Miniſters: but I rather think, with the excellent Mr. *Flavel*, that it deſcribes a falſe Teacher. — Mr. *Flavel* ſpeaking of falſe Teachers, ſays, " We find in a clear Prophecy of Goſpel " Times, what ſhame God will pour upon them, " *Zech.* 13. 4, 5. They ſhall be brought with " ſhame enough to confeſs, *I am no Prophet, I* " *am an Huſbandman; for Man taught me to keep* " *Cattle from my Youth.*" †

This is evidently the genuine Meaning of that Text, if we compare it with the foregoing Words. In *ver.* 1. God ſays, *He will open a Fountain to*

† *Flavel's Works.* Vol. I. P. 634.

cleanſe

cleanſe his People from Sin and Uncleanneſs: and *ver.* 2. mentions in particular, *that he will take away the Idols and falſe Prophets*: ver. 3. he ſays, *The Prophets own Parents ſhall riſe againſt him*; *yea, he himſelf ſhall be aſhamed of his Viſion,—And he ſhall ſay, I am no Prophet*; *for Man taught me to keep Cattle from my Youth*: q. d. 'I own I 'never was ſent of God; but I had my Education 'and Commiſſion only from Man.' Agreeable to this, is what *Paul* ſays to *Timothy*, when he charged him to be faithful in preaching the Goſpel, —*For*, (ſay, he) *the Time will come when they will not endure ſound Doctrine*; *but after their own Luſts ſhall heep to themſelves Teachers, having itching Ears*, 2 Tim. 4. 3. *i. e.* Men will get to that, as to hold that they can educate and commiſſionate their Miniſters themſelves;—and when they have made them, the Work which they do is, by fleſhly Wiſdom, to pleaſe itching Ears; rather than *by manifeſtation of the Truth to commend themſelves to every Man's Conſcience in the ſight of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 2.

Note one Thing here, and that is, it ſeems remarkable that when a good Man, (as I take Mr. *Edwards* to be) undertook to vindicate a falſe Scheme, the main Text he brings to ſupport it, is that which properly deſcribes a Deceiver.—And as it ſeems plain that here he miſconſtures Scripture; ſo I think it is as evident, that in what follows he lays down a Plan contrary to Scripture.

God's

God's Word ſays, *Having Gifts differing, let us improve them,—whether Propheſie, let us propheſie according to the Proportion of Faith: or Miniſtry, let us wait on our miniſtring; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on Exhortation*, Rom. 6. 7, 8. And again, *As every Man hath received the Gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God. If any Man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God; if any Man miniſter, let him do it as of the Ability which God giveth: that God in all Things might be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. 11.

But Mr. *Edwards* (and a great many others) ſay that if Perſons don't get their Gifts and Abilities at College, though they may be better qualified for the Work of the Miniſtry, than ſome others that have taken their Degrees, and are ordained; yet they may not be received: and why? Becauſe it will break over the Bounds that have been ſet:—Not by God, for his Bounds and Limits are deſcribed above; but they are Bounds which were ſet by the Traditions of Men. The Lord ſays nothing about the College, nor any particular Place or Manner of Education; but only ſays, *that every Man muſt improve the Ability that he gives*, &c. And though Mr. *Edwards* thinks that this is the Way "to avoid bringing Odium upon themſelves," yet I doubt not but that thoſe who perſiſt in this Way, will find that God *will make them contemptible and baſe before all the People, according as they have not kept his Ways, but have been partial in the Law*; Mal.

Mal. 2. 9 Neither is this the Way to prevent "breeding Uneaſineſs and Strife among others:" but quite the contrary. For many that they can't but own are godly Perſons, within theſe few Years paſt, have been brought ſo clearly to ſee that the Scheme that is held and practiſed in the Land, is (in this reſpect as well as many others) contrary to God's Word, that they could not be eaſy under it any longer, and therefore have openly renounced Communion with it.

2. Another Thing that evidenceth that many in our Day, ſet up Man in Chriſt's Place is, that they hold that if a Man has College Learning, and is regularly introduced according to their Order, he is a Miniſter of Chriſt, and ſent of God, though unconverted. But Chriſt ſays, *I am the Door; by me if any Man enter in he ſhall be* SAVED.— *All that ever came before me are Thieves and Robbers: but the Sheep did not hear them*, Joh. 10. 8, 9. That unleſs they make a Chriſt of themſelves, none come in by the Door, but thoſe that are in a State of Salvation: All others are Thieves and Robbers, let them have what Learning or Approbation they will of Men.— *Unto the VVicked God ſaith, what haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt take my Covenant into thy Mouth.* Pſal. 50. 16.

The moſt plauſible Plea that any have for unconverted Men's being Chriſt's Miniſters, is the Inſtance of *Judas*. But if they duly conſider how the

the Scriptures repreſent that Caſe, methinks they would have done with them Arguments. It is plain that he was choſen to fulfil a particular Prophecy concerning Chriſt, rather than to be one of his Meſſengers as the others were: therefore how much Pains did Chriſt all along take to diſtinguiſh him from his other Diſciples? *Joh.* 6. 70. *One of you is a Devil.* chap. 12. 6. *He was a* THIEF *and had the Bag, and bare what was put therein.* (a proper Deſcription of a falſe Teacher, chap. 10. 8.) Again, ſays Chriſt, *I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have choſen: but that the Scripture* (Pſal. 41. 9.) *may be fulfilled, He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel againſt me.* Joh. 13. 18. So that inſtead of *Judas*'s doing as much good as any of the Apoſtles, (which ſome aſſert he did) we have no Account that he ever did any Good in the World; but we have an Account of much Miſchief that he did; for what he was after was filthy Lucre, and not God's Honour and Souls Salvation,---- therefore when he could get the moſt Money by ſelling Chriſt, he readily embraced the Opportunity. And ſo will any unconverted Man do by the Cauſe of Chriſt, let him have never ſo much human Learning.

3. What makes it ſtill more evident, that many in our Day have ſet themſelves in Chriſt's Seat (*or rather have exalted themſelves above all that is called God*) with regard to this Matter, is, that as they can commiſſionate Miniſters: ſo they can diſpenſe with their Commiſſion when they think proper.

Paul says, *Necessity is laid upon me; yea, Wo is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.* 1 Cor. 9. 16. But these Men, though they say *They are called of God as was Aaron*: Heb. 5. 4. yet when worldly Interest suits best, they can lay down their Commission, and others can dismiss them from it, so as to speak no more in God's Name. We have plain Accounts of Sundry that the Lord took from other Callings and brought into this.----He called *Moses* from the Honours of *Pharaoh's* Court, *Exod.* 2. 10. &c. *Elisha* from his Plowing. 1 *Kings* 19. 19,----21. *Amos* from among the Herdmen of *Tekoa*. *Amos* 1. 1. and 7. 14, 15. *Peter* and others from their Fishing. *Matthew* from among the Publicans. *Matt.* 4. 18,---- 22. and 9. 9. and 10. 3. And *Paul* from among the learned Persecutors, &c.---- 1 *Tim.* 1. 12, 13. But for any of the Ambassadors of the King of Heaven to be by his Order, taken out of that Work, and put into any other Business in the World, is what I think the Scriptures are silent about: or rather that they speak terribly against. The Lord says, *Wo to the Idol Shepherd that leaveth the Flock: the Sword shall be upon his Arm*, &c. Zech. 11. 17. *The Hireling fleeth, because he is an Hireling, and careth not for the Sheep.* John 10. 13. "Ministers "are called *Stars*, and *Angels*: but how dread-"ful is it for such to leave their Stations? *Rev.* "1. 20. *Jude* 6. 13.

Yet there has been so many Instances of this

Nature

Nature in our Land, that it ſeems needleſs to ſtand upon the particular Proof of it. Some have left the Place of an Ambaſſador of Chriſt, for the Judges Bench, or Governor's Chair *. Others have turned to Merchandizing, or pleading Law; and ſo ſome to one Buſineſs, and ſome to another, as worldly Intereſt ſeems to ſuit beſt.

And yet they will pretend to read thundering Lectures to thoſe that they affect to call *Lay-Teachers* †; and will tell them that *every Man muſt abide in the ſame Calling wherein he was called*, 1 Cor. 7. 20. When they can leave their *ſacred Calling* for the Sake of the Honours or Riches of this World; Alas! to what a length have the Children of Men run in theſe Things! Now Reader, if thy Heart trembles for fear of this great Hoſt; and thou think it Preſumption for a Child to come out againſt ſo great an Army of Learned Men, as there are that hold theſe Things that I oppoſe: let us with *Gideon* and his Servant, take

* One Inſtance of this was the Hon. *Gourdan Saltonſtall*, Eſq; who formerly was taken out of the Pulpit at *New London*, into the Place of Governor over *Connecticut* Colony. He was the chief Inſtrument of changing the Conſtitution of the Churches through that Government, from Congregational, to what is called the *Saybrook Regulation*: by which, many godly Men have thought that he did as much Miſchief as almoſt any Man that ever was in the Colony.

† Dr. *Frank* ſays, that this Way of calling all but the Clergy Lay Men, is a 'pernicious Diſtinction derived from *Popery*; 'and it is not to be expreſſed, what horrid Miſchief it is the 'Cauſe of.' *Fear of Man*, P. 115. 116.

one

one Turn down by their Camp, and I doubt not but we ſhall hear ſomething that will ſtrengthen us againſt their Scheme: and as *David* cut off *Goliath*'s Head with his own Sword: and afterwards ſaid, *There is none like it*: 1 Sam. 17. 51. and 21. 9. So I have often thought that in this Caſe, I deſired nothing better than Men's own Weapons to fight them with.

"When you come near, you will hear them "delivering their Minds ſomething in this Form, "God has always ſet a ſacred Guard around his "Miniſtry, and it is a dreadful Thing to in- "trude upon it. Before *Moſes*'s Time, the "Prieſthood was confined to the Firſt-born: "after that, 'twas limited to the Tribe of *Levi*, "and the Family of *Aaron*, and the Stranger "that came nigh muſt be put to Death. This "held 'till Chriſt came, who in an immediate "Way ſent forth his Apoſtles, and they were "to ordain others, which were to commit that "Charge to faithful Men; and ſo the Line was "to deſcend down in an ordinary Way to the "end of the World!"

And thus they rank theſe Things into four great Periods:---one before the Law, one under the Law, the third under the Goſpel in the Apoſtles Time, and the fourth from their Deaths to the end of the World.

Now if we take a View in Scripture Light of either of theſe Periods, we may find many Things

in

in them, to cut down the Scheme which theſe Men plead for.

As to the firſt, they ſay, that "From the beginning 'till *Moſes*'s Time, the Miniſtry, or Prieſthood was limited to the Firſt-Born:" which ſhould we allow, yet it is certain that the Line ran rather in the ſpiritual than natural Birth. Thus in the firſt Family that was created, *Cain*, the Firſt-born was rejected; while God *had reſpect to Abel and to his Offering*, Gen. 4. 4, 5. Alſo in *Noah*'s Family, the Line was limited to *Shem*, tho' *Japheth* was the elder Brother, Chap. 10. 21. So in *Abraham*'s Houſe, though *Iſhmael* was the Firſt-born, yet *Iſaac* was the promiſed Seed, 21. 12. Likewiſe in *Iſaac*'s Family, God ſaid, *The elder ſhall ſerve the younger*, Rom. 9. 12.

Thus you ſee that thoſe who were ſpiritually the Firſt-born *which were written in Heaven*, (Heb. 12. 23.) the Lord took for his Servants and Miniſters, let them ſtand where they would as to their natural Birth: which clearly cuts off the Notion of any Man's being his Miniſter that is not *born again*.

Secondly, "From *Moſes*'s Time, they ſay, the "Prieſthood was limited to the Seed of *Aaron*, "and the Stranger that came nigh ſhould be put "to Death, *Numb.* 3. 10." From whence they argue, that it is a dreadful Thing for any to come into the Miniſtry, that are not introduced in their Way. But let us take a more cloſe View of theſe

these Things; and first observe, that them Priests had a Work to do, which no Mortal has now: and that was to offer Sacrifices for Sin; in which they typified Jesus Christ. But then I allow that they were to teach *Jacob* God's Law (*Deut.* 33. 10.) as well as offer Sacrifices. But what will Men do with this now? I trust none will be so vain as to say, that None may be Christ's Ministers in these Days, but Ministers natural Seed. Then I think I must bring it here; *Aaron* was a clear Type of Christ, and none might be Priests but his Seed: so I believe that none now ought to come into the Ministry, but such as are truly the Children of Jesus Christ, our glorious High-Priest.

Thirdly, In the Apostles Time all own, that Christ did by his divine Authority, and Holy Spirit, call them forth, some from one Business, and some from another, to be his Messengers. And that all Christ's true Minister's experience, essentially the same, I think is made evident in this Treatise.

"Concerning the last Period, they say, that "whom the Apostles ordained, were to ordain "others, and so the Authority is transmitted "down in an ordinary Way."--- Now I find that those who hold the Scheme that I oppose, disagree among themselves. Some say, that *Timothy* and *Titus* were (what they call) ordinary Ministers. But others, when we mention that *Timothy* was called by Prophesie, 1 *Tim.* 1. 18. and 4. 14.

and

and that he was to do the Work of an Evangeliſt, 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. I ſay, when theſe Things are mentioned, they ſay we muſt not expect ſuch Things now, for they were extraordinary Miniſters. And ſo they make all the Miniſters that we have a particular Account of in Scripture, to be Men in an extraordinary ſtanding: and the Miniſtry which they hold to, is that which has taken Place ſince the Bible was compleated; which for my Part I do not want to have any Concern with: but I chooſe ſuch a Miniſtry as is deſcribed, both by Precept and Example, in God's Word.

One main Text that is brought to ſupport this Scheme is that Promiſe, *Lo I am with you, always, even to the end of the World.* Matt. 28. 20. From whence they reaſon thus, "The Apoſtles themſelves did not live to the end of the World; "therefore the Promiſe extends to them that "they ordained, and to their Succeſſors, that "are introduced in an orderly Way to the end." But waving many groſs Abſurdities that might be mentioned, this one is ſufficient to cut off this Scheme intirely, *viz.* that it is contrary to the Goſpel, to apply that Promiſe to any unconverted Man, let him be introduced how he will. *All the Promiſes of God* IN *Chriſt are yea, and in him, Amen,* 2 Cor. 1. 20. And *Peter* tells us that a being by God's Power brought to the Knowledge of him, is the Way *whereby is given to us exceeding great and precious Promiſes,* 2 Pet. 1. 3, 4. That to be ſhort, the true Meaning of Chriſt's

Words

Words undoubtedly is this, That all his Children in every Age, who are by his Spirit called into this Work, and go on faithfully to teach all Things that he commands them; he has promised that he will be with, assist and bless them, even to the End of the World. And in no other Sense can I conceive it to be true at all, for Christ has never promised to be with his own Children when they turn aside from his Ways: and then surely he has not promised to be with those who never were in him, *who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, Joh. 14. 6. Much more might easily be said to illustrate these Things; but I have already enlarged much farther than I had any Design of, when I began this Discourse, and therefore I must hasten to a close.

USE II. Hence let every Soul that profess themselves to be Christ's Ministers, examine whether ever they were called into that great Work by the Influences of the Holy Spirit or not. All will own, that *to run before they are sent*, is a dreadful Thing: and I think it has been clearly shewn in this Treatise, that all run before they are sent, who are not called by the Spirit of God. O therefore my dear Reader whoever thou art, that art called a Minister of Christ, I charge you in my Master's Name, search critically into the Case and see, hast thou ever been brought into a saving Acquaintance with Jesus Christ? If not, how canst thou pretend to lead Souls to him, and never knew him yourselves? *Art thou a Master in Israel, and not Born again!*

Joh.

Joh. 3. 10. If thou haſt not got into the Kingdom thyſelf, thou wilt be in danger of hindering thoſe that are entering; and woful is the Caſe of ſuch Souls. *Matt.* 23. 13. O therefore look to your Standing!

And if you find that your ſtanding is in Chriſt, then examine whether he has called you to this Work or no. Had you ever ſuch a view of Chriſt and his dear Flock, as to draw forth your Soul to love them above every Thing here? *yea ſo as not to count your Life dear to you, ſo that you might finiſh your Courſe with Joy!* Act. 20. 24. Has the Treaſure of the Goſpel ever been opened and committed to your Soul? and has God's Command been therewith ſet home upon your Heart, to *go and feed his Sheep and Lambs!* Joh. 21. 15, 16. Have you been enabled clearly to count the Coſt, and to ſee an infinite Fulneſs in Chriſt to ſupply all your Needs, and to carry you through all the Trials of this evil World; and have his Promiſes been ſealed to your Souls, ſo as to bring you with all your Heart to yeild unto God, and (like *Abraham*'s Servant) to *ſwear unto him to be faithful in this Work of winning a Bride for your Maſter's Son*? Gen. 24. 2,.....9. Surely, if you have experienced theſe Things, you know ſomething of it.

USE III. Of *Exhortation*. *Firſt*, To thoſe who are called of God into this great Work of preaching the Goſpel. O my Fathers and Brethren, ſuffer a Word of Exhortation, though from a Child.

Be exhorted always to view the Worth of Souls; and let the *Terrors of the Lord*, and the *Love of Chriſt conſtrain you* and I ever to be faithful in our Maſter's Work, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. 19. Miniſters are called *Soldiers*, 2 Tim. 2. 3. and therefore they muſt expect to endure *Hardneſs*, and to go thro' a Variety of Trials here, and not to have a Life of fleſhly Eaſe, or worldly Applauſe: then let us *Fight the good Fight of Faith, and lay hold on eternal Life.*----Many Conſiderations there be that will move our Souls to be faithful, if rightly viewed. The Souls we have the Care of, are the Price of Chriſt's Blood. Thus ſays the Apoſtle, *Feed the Church of God which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood*, Acts 20. 28. O did Chriſt count Souls to be worth ſo much, that *he gave his Life a Ranſom for many*, and ſhall not we ſpend Life and Strength, and exert ourſelves to the utmoſt for their Salvation? Again, if we are found unfaithful, their *Blood will be laid to our Charge*, Ezek. 33. 8. And Soul Blood is dreadful to anſwer for. On the other Hand, if we may be inſtrumental of turning any to God; this will be infinitely preferable to all the Gains and Honours of this World. Souls that Miniſters are inſtrumental of converting, *will be their Crown of rejoycing in the Preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at his coming*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 19. Oh how joyfully will faithful Miniſters come up before their Judge, with a great Number of ſpiritual Children round them, that they have been Inſtruments of *turning from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*, Acts 26. 17, 18.

Secondly,

Secondly, Let me exhort all Chriſtians in general to improve faithfully what Talents God has given them. Though all are not called to be publick Teachers, yet all are commanded to improve the Gifts that they have. It is as neceſſaro in order for the Welfare of the Church of Chriſt, that every Gift be improved; as it is for our temporal Welfare, that all the Members of our Body be uſed in their proper Place: as the Apoſtle clearly ſhews, *Rom.* 12. 5. &c. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12--21. *The Eye cannot ſay unto the Hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you.*--- The neglect of thus living, is undoubtedly one great Cauſe of the Decay of vital Religion, and of bringing Barrenneſs upon the People of God. For Chriſt ſays, *Unto every one that hath* (i. e. improves what he has) *ſhall be given, and he ſhall have Abundance: but from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath*, Matt. 25. 29. By a faithful Improvement of what Light and Strength the Lord gives, Souls not only gain more, and alſo do Good to others; but alſo they hereby get further Eſtabliſhment of Soul, and a clearer Knowledge of what their Gift is. And therefore, if any of my Readers have ſome Conviction on their Minds about Preaching, and yet are at a Loſs about the Caſe; my Advice is, that with all your Hearts you obey your God in what has been made clear Duty to you. I don't deſire any Soul to go into any Thing without Clearneſs; but then be obedient to whatever God has made known of his Will to you, and that is the Way to have other Things made

made clearer and clearer. Christ says that, *If any Man will do his Father's Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self*, Joh. 7. 17.

Thirdly, Should these Lines chance to fall into the Hands of any that are called Ministers of Christ, who disregard, or have not experienced such a Call from God as has been described: to such I would say a few Words.

Sirs, Probably you may look with Disdain upon such a Child as I am: yet while you are making so much of human Learning, as though none could understand the Scriptures without such a great Degree of it; be intreated to pause a little, and take a more serious View of Things, and see if you are not runing in the Path that those did of old, who were found *fighting against God*: whose Language concerning Christ and his Followers was, *Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this People who knoweth not the Law are cursed*, Joh. 7. 48, 49. As if none knew the Law but they. But let Men go as far as they will here, yet without the special Teachings of the divine Spirit, they are *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 7. For *he that knows the Truth, the Truth shall make him free;*---*yea free indeed*, Joh. 8. 32, 36. What an awful Warning might that Passage be to you? Jude 11. *Wo unto them; for they have gone in the Way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam for Reward, and perished in the Gainsaying*

of

of Core. The Way of *Cain* was this: he brought an Offering to the Lord without Faith and the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit; and no doubt but he thought the Prieſthood belonged to himſelf; therefore when he ſaw that his younger Brother was prefered before him, he was wroth,--- and when he could get Opportunity he ſlew him, *becauſe his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous*, Gen. 9. 3, 5, 8. 1 Joh. 3. 12, Heb. 11. 4. And have you not often felt your Wrath boil, becauſe you have been convinced in your Conſciences that God has greatly favour'd ſome that you reckon far below your ſelves? Surely your Wrath has often prevail'd too far to be concealed: and had you the Power that many have had in Ages paſt, we have no Reaſon to think but that you would proceed to Murder, or putting to Death as well as they. Bleſſed be God that you are ſo far reſtrained.

The Error of *Balaam*, was his teaching for Reward, or to get temporal Gain, inſtead of ſeeking the Good of immortal Souls, 2 *Pet.* 2. 15. And how common is it in theſe Days among you that profeſs to be Chriſt's Miniſters, not only when you firſt ſettle to be governed by this to ſettle where you can get the moſt Money? but alſo after you have taken the ſolemn Charge of a Flock, if you can ſee a Proſpect of getting more ſome where elſe, preſently the People are threatned that if they will not give you more Sallary, you muſt leave them? And ſundry have thus left, and gone off from the People which they

they had ſaid, *The Holy Ghoſt had made them Overſeers of.* Like *Micha*'s Prieſt (which I think is the only one that we have Account of in Scripture that made a particular Bargain about his temporal Support) who when he had a bigger Offer by the Tribe of *Dan*, though he was content with *Micah* before, yet now not only leaves *Micah*, but alſo robbed him of his gods, *Judg.* 17. 10, 11. and 18. 19, 20. Very contrary to this is *Paul*'s Example, who tells the *Corinthians*, *I will very gladly ſpend, and be ſpent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved*, 2 Cor. 12. 15.

---- *And periſhed in the Gainſaying of Core.* This is often applied to ſuch as withſtand the Scheme that I have ſpoken againſt in this Book. But obſerve more cloſely who *Korah*'s Company were. Not the meaner Sort of People, but they were Princes of the Aſſembly, famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown. And what they gainſayed was this great Truth, *That it is God alone that can ſanctify and fit Men for, and alſo call them into this great Work of teaching and leading his People*: As is evident; for *Moſes* and *Aaron* were ſanctified and called into that Work by the immediate Influences of God's Spirit: but they ſaid, *Ye take too much upon you, ſeeing all the Congregation are holy, every one of them; wherefore then lift you up your ſelves above the Congregation of the Lord*, Numb. 16. 2, 3.

How exactly does this Character agree with

thoſe

thoſe who deny the Neceſſity of being ſpecially called by God's Spirit into this Work, and reckon it to be Pride in any to pretend to it?---- They periſhed in theſe Gainſayings; and Oh! take heed leaſt you follow them down to eternal Wo. There is no Men's Caſe under Heaven that the Scriptures repreſent to be ſo awful as the Caſe of unconverted, and unfaithful Miniſters. What dreadful Things are ſpoken to ſuch in the 23d of *Jeremiah*, the 34th of *Ezekiel*, and 23d of *Matthew*, as well as many other Places? O therefore fly immediately to Chriſt for Pardon and Salvation! If you come to believe in Chriſt, and ſo to ſtand in the Counſel of God, there is a Poſſibility that you may yet do Good to Souls, *Jer.* 23. 22. As I doubt not but there are ſome in our Days who did run into this Work without being ſent of God, that yet have been converted, and made a Bleſſing afterwards; yet that is no more of a Warrant for others to run ſo, than it is to run into any other Courſes of Wickedneſs, out of which ſome have been ſaved. But if you ſtill go on to make Merchandize of Souls, you will find that your *Judgment now of a long Time lingereth not, and your Damnation ſlumbereth not*, 2 Pet. 2. 3.

Fourthly, I would ſpeak a Word to thoſe People that look upon all in general which are introduced according to the common Way of the Land, to be Miniſters of Chriſt.----

My dear Fellow Men,

Be intreated no longer to take Things by Tradition, but firſt examine your own ſtanding, whether

whether you were ever *born again* or not. If you have not experienced that Change, you are conſtantly expoſed to be deluded and ruined for ever. For Chriſt tells us, that falſe Men, *If it were poſſible ſhall deceive the very Elect*, Matt. 24. 24. O! therefore reſt not in being like your Miniſters, (*Hoſ.* 4. 9.) unleſs they and you too are conformed to Jeſus Chriſt, *Heb.* 13. 7, 8. If you have not this, read and tremble at that awful Paſſage in Jer. 5. 30, 31. *A wonderful and horrible Thing is committed in the Land. The Prophets propheſie falſly, and the Prieſts bare Rule by their Means, and my People love to have it ſo: and what will ye do in the End thereof?*

Finally. Does the Lord as really by his Spirit call forth his Meſſengers now as formerly? then let every Soul that has an Intereſt at the Throne of Grace, earneſtly cry that *the Lord of the Harveſt would ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt, for the Labourers are few*, Matt. 9. 37. 38. Plead that he would ſpeedily gather his Flock, that have been ſcattered in the cloudy and dark Day, *Ezek.* 34. 12. And that he would deliver all his People from Devourers, and *give them Paſtors according to his own Heart*, Jer. 3. 15. *Now the God of Peace that bro't again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant; make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, thro' Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* AMEN, *Heb.* 13. 21, 22.

AN

AN APPENDIX.

Containing ſome ſhort Account of the Experiences and dying Teſtimony of Mr. Nathaniel Shepherd, *Paſtor of a Church of* CHRIST *in* Attleborough; *who died* April 14. 1752.

AFTER I had finiſhed what was deſigned in this Book, ſundry ſerious People who had heard ſomething of the Experiences and dying Teſtimony of Mr. *Nathaniel Shepherd*, were very deſirous to have them publiſhed with this Treatiſe. But at firſt I declined it, becauſe the Subſcribers were not informed thereof. Yet after further Conſideration, I remembered that many People in various Places had heretofore manifeſted to me a Deſire to have ſomething of that printed: And alſo apprehending that his Experiences would be entertaining

to the generality of thoſe that like this Book; and ſundry renewing their Requeſt to have his Teſtimony preſerved with this Diſcourſe, I at laſt thought I would venture to add it here by way of Appendix. And what made me more free to do it, was this: He was the firſt ordained Paſtor that has died among thoſe in this Land, *that have in this Day openly withdrawn Communion from the Scheme that I have oppoſed in this Book.* And though ſome have been ſo bold as to ſay, that *No Perſon which has done ſo, and perſiſts in it can die in Peace*, yet his Example, as well as Scores of others, clearly evidence the contrary.

What is here ſet down, is an Extract out of a larger Account which I took down when I happened to be at *Attleborough* ſome few Months after his Death, only for my own Satisfaction, and becauſe I thought ſuch Things ought to be preſerved, and not loſt. I ſet it down from the Mouths of thoſe that were with him in his Sickneſs, and at his Death, with the utmoſt Exactneſs I could, looking upon it a very great Evil to impoſe upon Mankind with a falſe Repreſentation of ſuch Things. I had it mainly from theſe three Perſons following, viz. Mr. *Joſhua Everett*, that lived near him, and was with him every Day of his Sickneſs; Mr. *William Carpenter*, Paſtor of a Church in *Norton*, and his afflicted Widow, who though ſhe was much tried about parting with him at firſt, yet was brought to a ſweet Submiſſion a few Hours before his Death; and was remarkably borne up under her Trials afterwards. I have added ſcarce any Remarks of my own on this

this Account, partly for Brevity ſake, and partly becauſe many have complained that often " ſuch " Accounts have ſhewn more what the Publiſhers " could ſay, than what the Perſon ſpoken of, ſaid " or did :" Therefore I have endeavoured as plainly as might be to give you his own Words, in which, *He being dead, yet ſpeaketh.*

The Perſon of whom we write, was born in *Norton* on *Feb.* 13th, A. D. 1712,13. But before he was grown up, he went and lived in ſundry Towns near *Boſton*, and after he was married he ſettled in, or near *Brookline*, where he joined to the Church, and for ſome Years he went on with ſome outward Strictneſs in Religion, but was ignorant of the *New Birth*, as he was made to ſee afterwards; a very ſhort Account whereof, I find written with his own Hand, as follows.

" I thought one Day in my Retirements that I " could not delay to put down a few Lines to keep " in Mind what God had remarkably done for my " Soul: which Lines I hope God will make uſe of " to bring freſh to my Mind his Love to my Soul " when ever I ſee them. Although I had in my " Life before thought my ſelf a paſſable Chriſtian, " though under a great Miſtake, as I found after- " wards;—and had been a falſe Profeſſor of Chriſt " in his Church almoſt eight Years, for which " Abuſe I deſire to lie low at his Feet all my Days, " —It pleaſed the bleſſed God in the 28th Year " of my Age, to ſend his dear Servant Mr. *White-* " *field* here amongſt us, and by his Preaching I

" was much affected, and thought I was reformed,
" but grew careleſs again: but I was ſeveral Times
" awakened again by God's faithful Miniſters that
" came among us; but ſtill remained a Stranger
" to my ſelf, until the Summer in the Year 1742,
" then it pleaſed God to ſend his dear Servant,
" Mr. *Davenport* among us, which was a wonder-
" ful Man to ſearch Hypocrites; and thus it pleaſ-
" ed God to make him an Inſtrument to open my
" Caſe to me, in a Sermon at *Boſton*, preached
" upon the Common from Matth. 3. 10. *And now*
" *alſo the Ax is laid unto the Root of the Trees.*—
" Which was in the 30th Year of my Age, on
" Tueſday the 27th of *July*.—And I was now un-
" der a ſharp Work of the Law, and was dead to
" and ſlain by the Law, and was in a deplorable
" Condition :—like the Woman that had the
" bloody Iſſue, and had ſpent all upon Phyſicians,
" and was nothing bettered, and then applied her
" ſelf to the Hem of Chriſt's Garment, which
" proved her Cure. And as long as a poor Sinner
" has a Pennyworth of Self righteouſneſs he never
" will come to Chriſt. I thought if I did not let
" go Self righteouſneſs I muſt periſh;— and if I
" ſhould let all my own Props go, I did not know
" but that I might fall into the Arms of Chriſt;
" as I believe I did the next Monday after, the
" ſecond Day of *Auguſt* in the Year above dated.
" A memorable Day to my Soul, from which
" Time I believe I can date my Converſion, while
" hearing Mr. *Davenport* preach from John 6. 37.
" *All that the Father giveth me ſhall come to me,*

and

" *and him that cometh to me I will in no wiſe caſt*
" *out.* And there I ſeemed to ſee the Power of
" CHRIST's Reſurrection; and that he had ſatis-
" fied God's Juſtice, that before was out againſt
" me: and that God was ſatisfied with what he
" had done. Glory to his Name. This is my
" Experience in ſhort.

Nathaniel Shepherd.

" Glory be given to FATHER, SON, and HOLY
" SPIRIT. Amen."

Sometime after his Converſion, he withdrew from the Church in *Brookline*, over which Mr. *Allen* then was Paſtor: the chief Reaſons whereof were, becauſe Mr. *Allen*, who had favoured the Work of God that was then going on in the Land, afterwards came out againſt it, calling it a Deluſion of the Devil; and alſo becauſe many were received into the Church without giving any ſatisfying Evidence of their Union to CHRIST, yea without being examined any thing about that; and Perſons of a corrupt Life were indulged in the Church, without being dealt with according to Goſpel Rule.

Sometime in the Year 1746, he was called forth publickly to preach the Goſpel, I truſt by the Influences of the divine Spirit.

And in the beginning of the following Winter, he began to preach to the Congregation in *Attleborough*, over which he afterwards was Paſtor: and in the Spring, at their earneſt Deſire he removed his Family there, and laboured among them with conſiderable of a Bleſſing, and in the Fall in 1747 he

he was choſen their Paſtor, and was ordained on *Jan.* 20th. 1747,8. And he was enabled ſo to walk as to gain a *good Report of them that were without*, and was beloved by many who were not of his Sentiments in Religion. Though it ſeems he was ſo ſenſible of the want of more Conformity to God, that among other Means that he uſed to attain it, he determined upon this Method, in the Fall of the Year 1751; viz. to ſpend one Day in the Week in *ſecret Faſting* conſtantly, when he was at home, and other neceſſary Buſineſs did not hinder, to ſeek for greater Meaſures of the divine Spirit, to aſſiſt and bleſs him, both in his private Walk, and his publick Improvements. And this Practice he kept up 'till he went his laſt Journey a little before he died: and before his Death he told ſome intimate Friends that he had enjoyed very great Comforts and Bleſſings from the Lord in this Exerciſe.

On Wedneſday *Feb.* 26. 1752. he ſet away a Journey up the Country towards *Northampton*, and was gone five Weeks, and he had remarkable Aſſiſtance and Succeſs in his Labours: five Souls he apprehended were converted in the Journey. He came home on *April* 2. And though he uſed commonly to come home from his Journeys ſo ſpent that he could do but little for ſome Days after it: yet now his Soul was ſo overborn with a Senſe of divine Things, that he ſpent every Day but one 'till he was taken ſick, in viſiting, and labouring with Souls round him, not only publickly, but alſo in teaching and warning them from Houſe to Houſe

with

with Tears: and ſeemed to be like one in Haſte to have done his Work.

Wedneſday *April* 8. (the Day he was taken ſick) as they were going to Family Prayer in the Morning, he ſaid to his Children, "Come we are going "to worſhip the great God, and ſee to it that you "do it in Reality! do not make a Mock of it, "as you have too often done!" Then he ſpake to his Children one by one, beginning with the eldeſt, and down to the youngeſt that could underſtand; and addreſſed his Diſcourſe to their particular Caſes with remarkable Clearneſs: and he told them that he expected in a little Time to leave their Mother a Widow, and to leave them Fatherleſs Chidren. Then he went to Prayer, and had aſtoniſhing nearneſs to God therein; and God's Power ſeemed greatly to ſeize every Soul preſent. And his beloved Conſort ſaid that when he went away that Morning, it looked to her that he had diſcharged himſelf to his Family, as if he was never to ſee them more. Soon after Prayer, Mr. *Joſhua Everett* came in, and they ſet away together to go to a Meeting, and by the Way they viſited ſeveral Families; and Mr. *Everett* ſaid, he never ſee him have ſuch Strength and Fervency in labouring with Souls before, as he had now: every Word appeared weighty; and Mr. *E——tt* ſaid, he heard him not leſs than a dozen Times that Day, vocally renew Covenant with God, and give away his All to him; and ſaid he longed to ſpend every remaining Breath for him.

In the Afternoon they went to the Meeting, and

Mr.

Mr. *Carpenter* preach'd, and in Meeting Time Mr. *Shepherd* was taken ill, ſo that as ſoon as Meeting was done, he haſtened Mr. *E——tt* about going home, and they ſet away together, but he was ſo ſwallowed up in diſcourſing on divine Things, that ſaid no more of his bodily Weakneſs 'till they had got juſt home, which was 5 or 6 Miles. Soon after he got into his Houſe he was ſeized ſo bad that his Wife could but juſt get him to bed; and he was exceeding Ill, and ſomething delireous moſt of the Night.

But on *Thurſday* Morning, the free exerciſe of his Reaſon was reſtored, and it was continued to him ever after 'till Death. And as Mr. *E——tt* called, as he was going to a Church Meeting, he asked him if he had any particular Meſſage to ſend to his Church? And (after pauſing a little) he ſaid "Yes, I have a Meſſage from God.—Tell them to "up and be doing, for Time is ſhort, and there is "a great Work to do: I hear the Sound of Death "a coming: O tell them — up, up, up!

His Diſtemper increaſed upon him very faſt, and in the Afternoon they got a Doctor to him, and he judged that he had the quick Fever, "or malignant Pluresy," and that he was ſeized very hard. But he remained comfortable in Mind through the Day.

On Friday Morning ſome neighbouring Brethren went over to ſee him, and as one of them was going to Prayer, they aſked what Petition he deſired them to put up for him. He anſwered that he had no certain Views whether he ſhould live or die

die in this Sickneſs. "But, ſaid he, that is not "the Thing with me, but what I want is, that I "may ſpend every remaining Breath for God!" His Diſtemper prevailed very faſt upon his Body, but as his *outward Man decay'd, his inward Man evidently was renewed Day by Day*; which he ſundry Times expreſſed (to People that came in, and aſked how he did) in theſe remarkable Words, "I have a ſhaken Body, but an unſhaken Mind."

Saturday ſundry Chriſtians met, and ſpent ſome Hours in Prayer with him: but he was ſo weak that he could ſay but little moſt of the Day, only he manifeſted a ſweet Calmneſs of Mind, and an intire Reſignation to God's Will, whether it was for Life or Death.

After they had prayed ſundry Times, Mr. *Carpenter* and *Everett* went into the Room where he lay, and he told them that he had a Deſire of ſeeing, and bearing Teſtimony to his dear Church for the Work of the Lord in theſe Days; but whether he ſhould have Opportunity or no he knew not, and therefore he did call them as Witneſſes to teſtify "That he was juſt of the ſame Mind about the "building of the Church of Jeſus Chriſt, and about "the Ordinances and Diſcipline thereof, as he had "been heretofore: and that he did bear Teſtimony "againſt all falſe Religion, both *Antinomianiſm* and "*Arminianiſm*, whether in Learned or Unlearned." And he gave them a ſolemn Charge always to be faithful for God, in his Work.

On Lord's Day, his firſt Fever broke, and the putrid Fever ſet in, ſo that all Hope of his Recovery

ſeemed to be gone: but he continued ſerene and comfortable in Soul. And ſometime in the Afternoon he deſired a Woman that was with him, to call in his dear Conſort and Children, "For, ſaid "he, I don't know but this is the laſt Opportunity "that I ſhall have with them; 'tis likely that I "ſhall be a cold Corpſe laid againſt the Wall be-"fore Morning."— And after they were come in (there being no Brethren preſent) he deſired his Wife to pray; which after ſome urging, ſhe did, but the Trial ſeem'd ſo hard, to part with ſuch a Friend in her difficult Circumſtances, that ſhe could not freely give him up to God: which he perceived. therefore after ſhe had done, he prayed; and (tho' he was very weak, and could bring out his Words but ſlowly yet) he did very diſtinctly, and with great Freedom and Strength, firſt give up his beloved Companion to the Lord: and prayed that he would give her both temporal and ſpiritual Supplies as ſhe needed, and as he ſee beſt for her. Then he went on and prayed for his Children, beginning with the eldeſt and down to the youngeſt; expreſſing their Names, which were all but one of them Scripture Names, and aſking particular Bleſſings on, and for them, with conſiderable Reference to Perſons of the ſame Names in Scripture †: and reſigned them all up to God, who firſt gave them to him. Then he alſo gave up to God his unborn Child. ‖ After

† Their Names are *Jonathan*, *Nathanael*, *Ebenezer*, *Mindwell*, *Iſaac*, *Elizabeth*, *Jacob*, and *Hannah*.

‖ Who was born in the following *June*, and his Name was *Samuel*.

that

that he came on to the Case of his dear Flock, which he could appeal to God, that *the Holy Ghost made him an Overseer of.* And he did in a wonderful Manner resign them up to his divine Master, expressing his Desire and Belief that he would take Care of them, and carry on his Work among them in this evil Day. Afterwards as People came home from Meeting, many came in to see him, and he had astonishing Assistance, and Clearness in speaking to each one, according to their several Cases; and to leave his dying Counsels and Charges with them. And though Death evidently was approaching on very fast, yet he was so far from fearing it, that he wanted to have it hasten: which among other Things) he shewed by this, viz. he held up his Hands several Times to see if the Blood did not begin to settle under his Nails; and when he perceived that it did, he said, "Twas what he had been "desiring and looking for."

Monday, before Day, they sent and called in the Neighbours, for they thought he was dying: but when the Person that has been often mentioned, came in, Mr. *Shepherd* seemed exceedingly swallowed up in Views of divine Things, and he took him by the Hand, and said, "O Brother *Everett!* "is this dying! I never thought it was so easy! "It has seemed hard to me to leave my dear Fa- "mily in this evil World, and above all, to part "with the dear Flock of God: but Oh! how easy "it is now! I can leave them with greater Free- "dom than ever I met with them in the World."

Then after one had prayed, he spake particularly

to

to every Perſon preſent, with ſpecial Clearneſs according to their ſeveral Caſes, and took them by the hand one by one, and took his leave of them: — and to thoſe that he counted Saints, he ſaid, "I "muſt bid you Farewel, but for a little Time." But to others he ſaid, "If you get an Intereſt in "Chriſt, then farewel for a little Space, but if not, "farewel to Eternity." To his Brother *Iſaac Shepherd* then preſent, he ſaid, "O Brother! you "and I have made many crooked Paths, but THE "Way is ſtrait ſtill."

And for an Hour or more he went on in ſpeaking of divine Things in a wonderful Manner. After that he made his Will and ſettled his temporal Affairs, in the Forenoon he ſeemed to revive a little; but it was not long before his bodily Diſtreſs came on heavier again: but through his whole Sickneſs he ſcarce ever ſpake of any Darkneſs in Mind, but only once, or more he ſaid, "Satan has been throw-"ing his Fiery Darts, but CHRIST hath gotten "the Victory."

Late in the Evening, when the Neighbours were generally gone home, and the Watchers were ſome of them gotten to Sleep, and he had been in a Drowze, his Wife who ſat by him, thought ſhe would juſt ſtep into the other Room to the Fire; but ſhe ſoon perceived there was ſome Alteration, and run back; and he ſaid, "Call the Folks, for "I am a going:" Which ſhe ſoon did, and ſent to the Neighbours, and ſundry of them came in preſently; and ſeveral of them prayed, and he appeared to have great Comfort of Soul, though he

ſpake

ſpake but a few Words more. Once he ſaid, "Fare-"wel vain World, I bid adieu."— And as the Chriſtians that were round his Bed, were with Free-dom ſpeaking of the Lord's Faithfulneſs to thoſe that have lived devoted to him here; how he will ſtand by them in a dying Hour: and were mention-ing that Scripture, Pſal. 37. 37. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; for the End of that Man is Peace.* I ſay, as they were ſpeaking of theſe Things, his Wife (who ſet by him wipeing off the cold Sweat) ſaid, "I don't queſtion but he under-"ſtands what we ſay, tho' he can't ſpeak." And then ſhe deſired him, that if he underſtood what they ſaid, he would hold up his Hand: which he did, firſt one, and then both of them; and then ſpake out juſt ſo as they could hear him, "Glory! "Glory! Glory! to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt!" Which were the laſt Words they ever heard him ſpeak. Soon after, he breathed out his Spirit into that eternal World, where undoubtedly he is, and will be unwearedly aſcribing Praiſe and Glory, to the ſacred Trinity, for ever and ever. He died about 3 o'Clock in the Morning on Tueſday *April* 14. 1752.

His Funeral was attended next Day, by a great Number of People, after a Sermon preached by Mr. *Carpenter*, from Pſal. 34. 19. *Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*

THE

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ERRATA.

In Page 7 Line 11, 12. for held and practised, read practised or tolerated. P. 11. l. 13. r. Duty. P. 12. l. 22. r. up. P. 69. l. 20. r. Isai. 29. 13.

FINIS.